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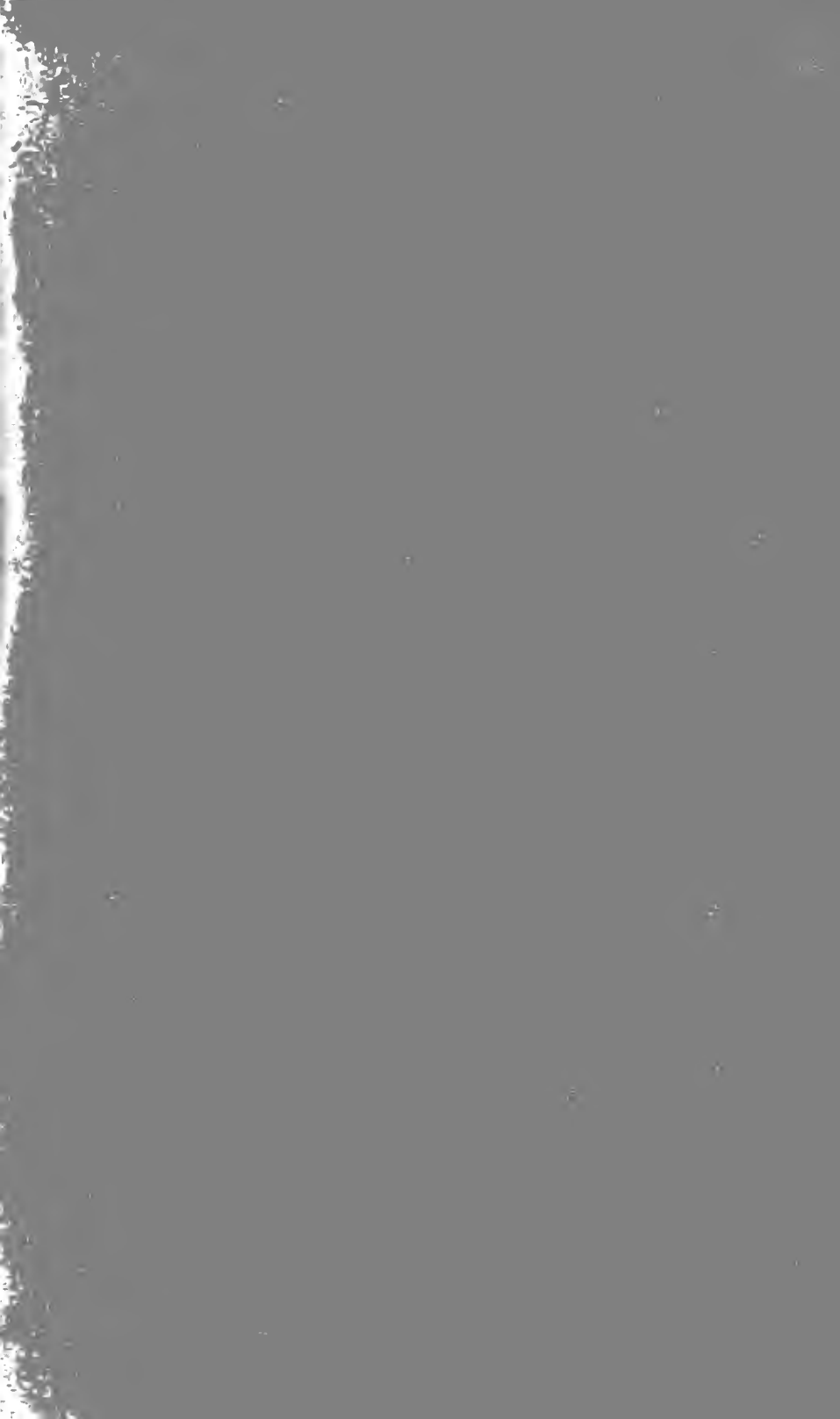




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*THE FLURRIED YEARS*







[Frontispiece

# *The Flurried Years*

:: :: *By Violet Hunt* :: ::

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WITH 16 ILLUSTRATIONS

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## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	<i>Facing Page</i>
FRONTISPIECE	
JOSEPH CONRAD AND HIS PROOF-SHEET . . . . .	32
MARY MARTINDALE . . . . .	50
JOSEPH LEOPOLD . . . . .	62
MY NIECE . . . . .	66
HENRY JAMES . . . . .	88
MY MOTHER . . . . .	112
AUNT EMMA'S HOUSE AT BOPPARD . . . . .	126
DAVID GARNETT AND JOSEPH LEOPOLD AT ASSMANS- HAUSEN . . . . .	132
GONERIL IN BED . . . . .	152
MY SISTER . . . . .	208
MISS REBECCA WEST AT HOME . . . . .	214
OUR COTTAGE AT SELSEY . . . . .	218
V. H. . . . .	242
THE GOOD SOLDIER . . . . .	260
WILLIAM HENRY HUDSON . . . . .	268



## PART I



# THE FLURRIED YEARS

1908

*The Great Affair of All—"One word is too often profaned"—Oliver Madox Brown and Joseph Conrad on Passion—Oscar before America—"Hic sunt leones"—I go there—The New Argonauts—W. L. George on Genius—W. B. Yeats on the stoking of it—Mr. Chandler an important person—Mrs. Chandler ditto—Hermosa—The Impropriety of Thomas Hardy—Editors and Backers—The Pinker of Agents—With the Monds at Joyous Gard—Mr. Carlyon Bellairs and the British Navy—The German Professor—The Soul's Wireless—Conrad on Prestidigineous People—Perceval Gibbon—Arthur Marwood—Payment of Contributors—Arnold Bennett—Cunninghame Graham—W. H. Hudson and the Cuckoo—His ideal Woman—The Association of Conrad and the Editor—Damon and Pythias—Agonies of Composition—The Pent Farm—S. S. McClure and Miss Willa Cather—Henry James as "Modeste Mignon"—H. G. and the Editor's Mead—Suffragettes at Mrs. Godfrey Benson's—Mr. Asquith and the Dinner Napkin—Christmas Party at 84—The launch of the "English Review."*

LIFE is a succession of affairs, but there is always one affair for which the years, from birth, are a preparation, a hardening, a tempering, and a more or less serious erosion, possibly, of the sword of the fighter. And there comes, sooner or later, according to the sets and the entries and exits of the other actors, one's own supreme moment. One is on. And that entry, being but human, one may so easily muff. That moment, some will say, I did muff.

Not, said a soldier to me, walking along the pier at Redcar in the days of the bitterness of the war—when words flowed from the mouths of deeply tried men, ebullitions of a deep and desperate cynicism that seemed to sour the sunlight—not, said he, till a person comes to lie on his deathbed and is faced with that five minutes'

unrolling of the Book of Judgment—that feverish access of memory, including full clarity of vision, of which all who have been brought back from the gates of death have spoken and written—does a person know which is *the* affair of all. And not even then, perhaps, with which of the three prime passions that moment would come to be concerned—affair of the heart?—affair of ambition?—affair of revenge?—these simple emotions that sway us indifferently still. Though nowadays Love stalks kingly in the forefront of motive, Elizabethan men were not ashamed to put either of the others first. Even Othello's great love was compound of the ambition to be master in his own house and husband of his own wife.

“One word is too often profaned——” So often that I will not. And because I think Love, in my exquisite sense, is too beautiful and too rare. Once in a blue moon! The blossoming of an aloe! I confess I should like to see the word and the particular emotion it describes, relegated to the categories of abnormality—used to signify some monstrous spiritual growth. For me the propaganda which makes the world go round—not on—is liking, not love, liking with a little “I,” not Love with a big one, jogging it all the time so as to carry on in a desultory manner the uncalled-for curse of existence by a series of small shocks—as one might say the progression of a motor-car. And what is Passion but a dangerous kind of cargo that one takes on board, contraband more often than not, and of absorbing interest to the mechanic since it implies danger, stress, and effort, and entails pains and penalties which may make a continuance of the journey impossible.

The car run in the name of Love may be a good starter, and there is always the chance that it may subside into efficient and decorous easy-going, and so fare on to the terminus, delivering its crew in very nearly as good

condition as that in which they set out. Yet no man "magnanimous and tender," no woman "passionate and true"—I quote the great male summing up of these special sex characteristics perpetrated by F. M. W. Myers in his Poems long ago—would venture to talk of Love in connection with its progress. But I think that the expression Miss Austen uses to describe the strongest emotion of which her worthier characters are capable—Marianne Dashwood is out of court—might be used to denote the slab-compound of sentiments and feelings that enables a husband and wife to get on after several years of union—Attachment.

"Love me little—love me long," is the proverb invented for careful starters in matrimony, or the railway-man's "White for right, and red for wrong, and green for gently go along."

Love me little—that is, like me a great deal ; and liking *can* last. Of course there are "Moments struck from midnights !" as the sober, burgomaster Browning says, but the continuous cinematograph ends certainly in boredom, and may end in tragedy. As Browning, too, said of Professor Milsand of Avignon—a dull darling—I knew him :

I have a friend over the sea.  
I like him, but he loves me.

Half a tragedy, at any rate, there ! Poor little Milsand was devoted. He was invited to stay every year, but he was not happy. And then we have Swinburne's many loves that are good to see—very good to see if the avoidance of stress is any object. For one love is the devil since it implies the obstination of sex. The love-liking is, can be, everywhere ; love of lovers—of parents—of brothers—of friends. And, partaking of our animal nature, most surely combined with neglect and cruelty. Each man and woman, too, is apt to kill the thing

he or she loves, and, being human, does not turn a hair but being, peradventure, an author, writes about it.

Joseph Conrad, dealing masterly with these shifting values, of which he was quietly cognisant, would seem in his books to have selected one virtue for a master key to open all locks in the House of emotional conjecture. He chose that his world should rest on Fidelity. His Love was a concentration on one particular object, of steadfastness, honour, courage, pity, and generosity ; " Old abstractions," Mr. Squire says, " to which he held firm." With Conrad it represented a crime for a man to question courage and honour, to stifle decent traditions and conscience. Splendid, useless fidelity, like that of the dog watching by its master's body, licking the hand that will never stroke it again, perhaps never did, perhaps struck it instead of caressing it. Or the silly boy on the burning deck, with whose story our romantic yet common-sensible childhood was fed. But when you get older you find you can't better it. When nothing holds, when the very scaffolding of one's ideals, honour, love, and the rest, totters and crumbles, some absurd fetish of endurance, some catch-word, like the noble slogan of the Grants going into battle and shouting to the hills that look down on them : " Stand fast, Craigellachie ! " must serve our turn and steady our nerves. We don't fight for King Charlie, but we go—or don't go—on, bearing the world's annoy " with a sigh that is not quite a sob, a smile that is not a grin."

Of once sown seed, who knoweth what the crop is ?  
Alas, my love, Love's eyes are very blind.  
What would they have us do ? Sunflowers and poppies  
Stoop to the wind.

So sang, artlessly, for he was only nineteen, Oliver Madox Brown, who died so young and broke the heart of his father. One does not know what he would have

done when his time came? Bowed to the wind perhaps—adopted the *laissez faire* attitude of the artist like others of his race.

But one thing is certain, artist or no, man and woman always, the crop belongs equally to the associate sowers who have devoted their patch to the raising of it. Conrad's deification of the sense of responsibility in emotional affairs is to me the high-water mark of civilisation. Wilde, of course, put the case for crude animalism. *Not* to kill "the thing he loves," according to the dictates of the sadic brute that, willy-nilly, does reside in Man, but to cherish it, maybe in boredom, is the real crux of decency—to dig one's emotional crop in the sweat of one's brow; with conscientiousness to reap the harvest of tares—or even of dragons' teeth.

I remember Oscar, before America, when he was really still a slightly stuttering, slightly lisping, long-limbed boy, sitting in the big arm-chair at Tor Villa, where we lived then, lounging fatuously, tossing the long black lock on his forehead that America swept away, and talking—talking—happening to talk about maps and other things. We did—father, mother, Oscar and I—talk of anything we could any of us lay a hand to; and this Sunday evening it was maps—the maps of the Ancients that he had been seeing: Africa.

"Oh, Miss Violet," he exclaimed, drawing his breath through his teeth in a sibilant whisper of intense appreciation, "think of a map drawn of a whole continent, and beside the names of an insignificant city or two a blank and: *Hic sunt leones!* Oh, Miss Violet, let you and me go there."

"And get eaten by lions?" said I.

Well, we did. I did. To Germany. And, one way and another, I seem to have fought with wild beasts all my life.

I have been called a sparrow ; but I think I am much more like a robin—Heaven's Litigant, Blake calls him. I have always been up against something—wanting to alter something—fighting something. I do not invite contest exactly ; it comes to me. When I was a child in a perambulator the well of it was always full of petitions against some abuse or other—the draining of Thirlmere Lake ; the building over of the New Forest ; and, of course, the early suffrage movement championed by Miss Lydia Becker—which my mother was sedulously sending round to one or other of her influential friends, such as Robert Browning, John Millais, or Edward Jones (as he was then) for signature. Oh, how cross Mr. Jones was at being disturbed ! For he opened the door himself, and glared with his mild blue eyes at the German nurse who proffered the petition. He would sit at ladies' feet, kiss their pale hands, but not those of women who voted, so he told her.

When I grew up I threw myself anew into the Suffrage movement, and should certainly have done my three months in the terrible second division if it had not been for the provisions I made for the care, delegated to me, of an invalid mother and a young niece. Mrs. Pankhurst and Christabel kindly dispensed with my services *in extremis*. So my nose remains in its own shape, not squashed against the flank of a horse—voted by Miss Evelyn Sharp as the safest place of all when the mounted police were turned out to disperse us—or torn in the efforts of the doctors to forcibly feed us. In the eighties I was sent to Paris, on the advice of a good friend of my mother, Mr. Crackanthorpe, to avoid the possibility of being dragged ever so slightly into a divorce case, a prime disaster for an unmarried girl in those Victorian days.

So, one way or another, since I have grown to woman's estate, I have been up against it—the Law, I mean. I

can scarcely count my appearances in those grim halls before the blind Master in Lunacy, encounters with what is worse than an enemy you cannot see and that is an enemy who cannot see *you*, resisting, for my mother and for pride's sake, the efforts of aunt and sister to remove her from my care. And when the fighting was all done in 1916 it was mine to attend once a week with the accounts that I, in the intervals of writing books and attending to social duties, had got ready for the Official Receiver, whom I was "under."

Sitting on the edge of a chair, frightened out of my life by the horrid implications of my "fiduciary position" and this gloomy place, I would go through them with a handsome young deputy of this important functionary, with whom I had danced and might again. While he was scrutinising them my eyes would rest on the sill—used as a bookcase—of a window, cut in half to light another room. In windows of this kind this exceedingly ill-designed palace of justice abounds. It looks one thing from the outside and another from the inside—an apt description of the law, I think. And I would observe a copy of my latest book, and wonder what they had got it there for? Anything I wrote could be carped at, might contain grounds for "Actions." Then the young man would say politely: "This item—eleven shillings for parrot seed—seems excessive?" And I would reply in penitence: "Eleven *pence*. I am sorry I write so badly."

Like Miss Flite, I have haunted for years the law courts of this as well as those of other countries. But, unlike Miss Flite, who was always "expecting a decision shortly," and never got it, I have been favoured with some very disagreeable ones *prestissimo*. I have had the honour of bowing my head, with a large and fashionable hat on it, quite a number of times to its decrees, in fact and in theory. My head, with or without the

hat, is not, though bowed, "bloody," to quote the poet Henley's touching vaunt. I have got lots of copy, and I daresay I am a good deal better off than Miss Flite, but indeed, *je ne demande pas mieux* than never to see those grey stones again.

And I am sure I shall. For I am credulous, a non-sifter of evidence, hasty, liking to scorch through to my end, and, withal, egregiously, incredibly, sincere. Blatant sincerity like mine always gets one suspected: it is so much too good to be true.

But leave it at that, and life is very simple. You have just got to choose *à quelle sauce* you will be devoured. Choose your betrayer carefully, and *pour ses beaux yeux*. It makes it easier to suffer.

When I was a little girl John Ruskin took me for a long walk in the nut-woods at Brantwood, and, in reply to some question of mine, told me simply:

"Find someone you can love and trust, and then count no sacrifice too great to make in that one's service."

*And trust!*

All the same, one has had the experience; and I would like to set down now, more or less, the things that impressed one, the things that depressed one, as they fell in the course of the flurried years 1908 to 1914. There are some things no one tells, some things that no woman tells, some things I cannot tell, but people know them.

And, as a literary woman, my years of mark and usefulness coincided with a great literary launch, that of the "greatest Review in the world." This was in 1908, that began with such high hopes, both personal and literary, and ended with the loss of the ship—several ships, indeed, as full of precious and important merchandise as those of the Merchant of Venice, for which the lady of Belmont so sweetly indemnified him—and

the downing of a genius ; surely the greatest crime that can be committed by mediocrities who ought to know their places better and refuse to help to pull down those who are doing a portion of the world's work. To thwart such a one is, to my mind, a sin against light.

I am one of those who believe that genius, of its nature, is a state permanently bordering on frenzy, a beatitude which entails certain pains and penalties that no one else can shoulder, and some others which can generally be delegated to disciples. Every genius should have, must have, disciples.

The mechanism of genius is entirely different from that of those who are expecting to benefit from its ministrations. Genius must live ; the engine must be stoked. Once, when Mr. Yeats and I were sitting in the stalls at a suffrage matinée, listening to a very wonderful and fat tenor singing lustily for the Cause, the poet remarked : " It's a pity this kind of locomotive has to wear its tender in front ! "

Another author, Mr. W. L. George, made a still more cynical appraisal of a brother novelist : " He's just a stomach with a brain on top." It seems to be generally admitted that Genius is incapable of bearing, should not be called upon to bear, all its own burdens ; its back is not broad enough, or it bends and lets trouble go over it. What can it do but, like sunflowers and poppies, stoop to the wind.

Well, well ! What was done was done, and each bears from thence onwards his own burden. Genius could not be protected, although I tried, my self-imposed duties including even the prevention of attempted suicide, which, in those days, I conceived of as a mistake.

The year 1908 was the year of the Sicilian Players, of the life-struggle for the Vote, of my old friend Somerset Maugham's great dramatic break beginning with *Lady*

By

*Frederick*, of John Galsworthy's pet slum-child singers of ballads at the Esperance Club. I had published my best novel, and Ford Madox Hueffer the third volume of his historical trilogy, *The Fifth Queen Crowned*.

Old Ford Madox Brown, his painter grandfather, was my father's intimate friend, while the wonderful boy, his uncle, who wrote the lyric I have quoted, sat at the feet of my mother. I used to go to pre-Raphaelite children's parties at the Seddons' and Tebbs' to help, and often had to rap the fingers of the two high-spirited Hueffer boys for playing ball with the penny buns ; and, owing to my Corsican governesses, I was able to give his father, the musical critic of *The Times* and introducer of Wagner into this country, some notes about Corsica for the libretto of *Colomba*.

When next I met the wild, aggressive boy of the children's parties who took to literature at sixteen and published *The Brown Owl*, he was a man grown, married, and with two children, to whom he wrote lovely poems. It was at a dinner at John Galsworthy's. I will not describe him. It is difficult for me. And even then, although we walked home together along the Kensington Road, talking of Pre-Raphaelitism and the price of copper, I did not see him again for a year. Then suddenly I was pitchforked by the kind offices of a friend into his office and his great venture of the *English Review*, which all that hot summer was simmering in the minds of its promoters, Hueffer, Marwood, Conrad, and Wells, busily collecting artists to write and men of good will to read what they had written, arranging its lovely format and type, and not neglecting the sweet uses of advertisement.

My literary agent at that time was the late J. B. Pinker, prince of agents, kindest friend to his clients and a great rider to hounds. I have sat with him in his office and observed the back of his head green with some

nasty fall he had had. "Jy B" I had known as a boy in the office of *Black and White*, and he and I used to race to get the foreign stamps out of the editor's waste-paper basket for our collections. Early in this fateful year I sent "Jy B" three stories to place, which he had returned, saying that he could do nothing with them. They have had a lot done with them since. In despair I wrote to Mr. Wells, asking him if he could tell me where to send them. He answered, on a speaking postcard: "Send them to the *English Review*. It's *It* this year!" Of course *Tono-Bungay* was booked to come out in it.

Although I had known the editor of the Review since childhood, I had become rather a stranger to him, so I begged H. G. to write to him and introduce me as a wishful contributor. Then I got another postcard: "He knows you quite well, he says; and will you take them to the office, 84 Holland Park Avenue?"

The editor lived in his office, and the office was a maisonette over a poulterer's and fishmonger's combined, in the long road that leads to Oxford, bordered by nice tall trees now, planted when I was a little girl going daily past the shop on my way to school, the first of the kind planned by Lady Stanley of Alderley, Miss Russell Gurney, and all sorts of big-wigs, for the amalgamation in infancy of the classes and the masses. Miss Mash, the greengrocer's daughter, and Miss Agnes Lane Fox, now Lady Grove, sat on either side of me. Miss Margaret Burne-Jones and Miss May Morris held honoured places in the school. We did amalgamate, all of us, very nicely, playing in the yard with a large football presented by the foundress, and quarrelling as much as was necessary for complete fellowship.

There was a chaste brown door—the side door of the shop originally—with a gilt plaque, ENGLISH REVIEW, LTD., just over the bell. There was no need of a bell,

for, from the date of the installation of the Review, this, the editor's house and home, was left permanently open to all and sundry, contributors, burglars, and political refugees. Vera F——, the woman who shot at Stolypin, found an asylum here in 1908. An English burglar contrived, one summer afternoon, to steal all the editor's spare tall hats, while Azef, the Russian spy, so he informed me, was in the habit of coming in and ransacking the editor's desk. Altogether, 84 Holland Park Avenue seemed to be a mark for all sorts of Communist, Bolshevik attempts, a regular danger-spot. On the pavement outside a man had been sandbagged and left for dead; and Mr. Chandler, the poulterer, his landlord, and a big, hefty, man carried his own takings to the bank every day, but went continually in fear of a knife in his back. The editor rather liked it.

Nothing more terrible than the sickly, depraved smell of chickens assailed me as, opening the door, I walked upstairs past the shop premises to the first floor, where the editorial department was. Pre-Raphaelite engravings, portraits of the editor's aunt, Christina Rossetti, and his grandmother, Mrs. Ford Madox Brown, photographs, Mr. Rothenstein's portraits of Conrad and of other well-known people—lined the stairs. The open door of a bathroom yawned half-way up, and then there was a broad landing, ending in a permanently open door which banged intermittently. The editor's nerves luckily were not that kind. Anyone could have invaded his hearth and home at any time. It was emphatically *not* an Englishman's castle, in any sense of the word, and he wore both his literary heart and his valuable time on his sleeve.

The editorial department occupied the whole first floor; walls had been knocked into each other and formed a large room, with three windows on the front and one on the back looking on to Mr. Chandler's rubbish

yard. This room, full of corners and queernesses, I was to know very well afterwards. Upstairs there was a kitchen and a dining-room and two small bedrooms, one little more than a cupboard.

The staircase leading up there was obviously rickety, but I did not go up that day. Invitations to the editor's famous little home-cooked dinners came later.

The editor, wearing a brown velvet coat that had belonged to Rossetti, came forward, and a lovely, golden-haired girl whom he introduced as Hermosa. She was going to be secretary to the Review, and was making tea. I was shy ; I always am of editors, because they are so powerful. I noticed some beautiful furniture, but very little of it. A large Broadwood piano filled up one corner, and there was a Chippendale bureau on which, the editor said, Christina Rossetti had written her poems. There was a cabinet that he said had belonged to the Duke of Medina-Sidonia, that he had picked up for a song. It was crammed with manuscripts, rammed in anyhow, bulging, sagging, sprouting out of the beautiful incrusted doors, and was in a shocking state. After tea, and not till then, the editor took my manuscripts all together between his two hands, and, opening and shutting them, flitted the pages. . . . There were three long-short stories. . . .

He said suddenly, pausing at the middle one : " I'll take this."

I said, " But you haven't read it ! "

He had chosen " The Coach," rather a nice tale of the uneasy, which I had written wandering along the shores of the Cromarty Firth when I was staying at Invergordon with the Monds. Well, that was that !

Three days later I lunched with him and Hermosa and Stephen Reynolds—his partner, secretary, I know not what—in the back room of the pastrycook's next door, for the editor kept no servants. Mrs. Mill er

a nice old thing who was kitchenmaid to the Benckendorfs at the Russian Embassy, came in every morning for an hour or two. She used to fill a coal-scuttle timed to last the day, and if the editor wanted any more he had to fill it himself from the coal-cellar at the bottom of the garden, which grew nothing but empty packing-cases and reams of discarded packing paper, and—the moment the Review was really started—priceless manuscripts that the rabbits of Mr. Chandler browsed upon. I do not know who did the sweeping, but I suspect that Hermosa, the dainty presiding goddess, saw to it that the room was dusted and the curtains fresh. She was beautiful and austere, kind and cold—an admirable secretary for a literary man to have. She put the papers back, answered the letters, and generally tried to keep the review and its editor straight.

Then I was made to work, to assist at the terrific catering for the Review's prestige and opening number. Manuscripts began to come in. Thomas Hardy's "Sunday Morning's Tragedy" came in in August; and there were all sorts of fusses about foreign contributors.

I left London at my invalid mother's wish, and took her to the sea. Being modern Englishwomen full of customary observances, it was considered impossible that she or I should stay in town in August out of the season. We went down to Bournemouth, to the house of the son of an old friend, Kegan Paul, the publisher. Dan Leno, very ill, imagining that he was the tall clock in the hall that ran up and down once a day, the one borderland patient allowed, was staying in the house at the time, patient and inoffensive. Leaving my mother there in Dr. Paul's care, I took a holiday for a month. My nicest visits, on her account, could never last longer.

Since Wireless—wonderful Wireless—I have come to believe that some sort of receiving station can be set up under conditions of intense human sympathy, of which

neither the sender nor the recipient of messages sent is necessarily cognisant, and I always have remembered a song that Olga Lynn, at Torphins, used to sing to us by request out of *La Périhole* :

Tu n'es pas beau, tu n'es pas riche,  
Tu n'as même pas d'esprit,  
Et, pourtant, brigand, je t'adore. . . .

Several times in my life I have received such apparently and obviously purposeless messages. Once I dreamed that Rennell Rodd, a dancing partner of my youth, was very ill somewhere and calling me by name. I woke and told my sister. Since then, reading the memoirs of Walburga, Lady Paget, I find that he was lying seriously ill in Zanzibar that very day. I can only suppose that I caught his desperate wireless intended for someone else. And I have received two calls distinctly intended for me, addressed to me, I think, with intention by a human being in distress.

This first time was when I was in my apogee, fairly young, healthy, contented, happy and gay, living in a delicious, delirious haze of blue and gold in a castle by the sea. The Monds had rented, at my suggestion, Joyous Gard that year. And on the russet rock of Bamborough, with the azure sky and sea all round, in that wonderful autumn of 1908, a sort of summons from a desperate human heart came to me where, in this palace which Lord Armstrong had evolved out of the ruins of a mediæval castle, I was living on the fat—on the richness—of the land, listening to the strains of Norah Clench's violin and Connie Goetze's soothing playing, sitting to Sigismund in the old chapel, motoring into Scotland in a Rolls-Royce, bathing from the golden sands by day, and dancing by night in the hall with a *sémillant* German professor from Wurzburg who had married his English girl pupil. It is a way German professors have. In the

rests I looked down from the window to see the white foxes—the vicar had told us of them—playing on the yellow beach blanched by moonlight.

And I was reminded of the editor, sitting patient and forlorn in the swelter of London on his nest-egg of the *English Review*. There was much that was German in the air to remind me of him. Carlyon Bellairs, the Member for Lynn, was terrorising us with the German menace, distributing frightening leaflets, dinging into our ears his projects for the expansion of the Navy, trying to get signatures to a petition. . . . Taking me to an east window, he would say in a fine, conspiratorial voice, "Look there! Straight across. There lie Cuxhaven and the Kiel Canal, exactly opposite us, and England prone—practically defenceless!"

It *was* terrifying. There is along that coast a chain of high basaltic rock crowned with castles all the way to Scotland, but there are, in between, bights and bays and even sands suitable for landing. But the Brunners and the Monds did not much seem to want to contribute to an increase of English ships, for there was "no danger of a war"—"too many commercial interests involved on both sides. . . ." *Bona fide* they assured me of this, and thought no evil, poor dears!

The German professor held his peace on these large issues and talked to me on the Swinburne poems he was slowly and strenuously translating, and I could not help thinking of the lonely editor stewing at his desk in the fetid airs of the poulterer's shop, spending his evenings in the Shepherd's Bush Empire near by, with an untidy sheaf of manuscripts to read in the waits so as to avoid looking at the advertisement curtain; turning out for air into the squalid passage alongside, and in again. Both Mr. Goldring and Mrs. Conrad have described his stormy mode of editing *con amore*.

Yes, he was drawing me. I felt I must do something. Go home or write? I had been far too happy to write letters, but I pulled myself together and did so—a letter containing vague messages of sympathy, as of an angel stooping from heaven to a mortal in durance. And I got a pathetic answer in the editor's own special mode. Yes, everything was beastly, but he was plugging away. No, he had been there all the time. When was I coming back to help with the review? God was not Good. Yet he prayed Him to bless me. His writer's cramp was so bad that he could not write more.

While I was there I succeeded in buying, at auction, the house on Campden Hill which my mother leased, and got one of the Monds to be surety for the purchase-money. Thenceforward my invalid mother became my tenant and paid her rent to me—an impossible relation, as I found it when she came to die, for the other beneficiaries under her will could not be brought to see that as landlord, I was entitled to claim reparations of the outgoing tenant, like any other landlord.

It was all dragon's teeth that I was sowing that year, and I should have left the salvation of F. M. H. alone, for that, also, became an impossible relation. The male must not depend on the female, even in business; but if love comes in the situation becomes more than impossible. F. M. H. would have done very well without me; perhaps better, as I have come to see now.

But the octopus tentacle of the extreme need of the artist-egotist for an Egeria—any number of Egerias—won. He got his way. I am cynical, and I do think there was something of the literary octopus in the drawing, insinuating pressure of his desire, flung greedily in my direction. An editor in quest of assistants is like a mother at a registry office, straining every nerve to get a good nurse for her new-born child that is to knock

the world. The review was everything to him, and I could jolly well help him with that! A woman at a loose end of life, with a visiting list of notabilities as long as your arm and some experience of literature, and especially of the genus review! I had had a good deal to do with certain Argonautical expeditions that never attained the Golden Fleece, but were, all the same, great and instructive adventures in many ways.

There was *Chapman's Magazine*—a well-filled graveyard full of the best short stories. And there was *Black and White*, on which I spent the best blood of my girlhood. That was, perhaps, frankly commercial. But the *English Review* was of the nature of a dynastic venture, a Forlorn Hope led for the supremacy of the Kingdom of Literature gone derelict, and the crown tossing about somewhere in Fleet Street for him who would to take it. A Jacobite laird, turning out with his clansmen, could not have spoken of the object of the fight more earnestly and solemnly than did Joseph Conrad. One should have heard him when the principles, the abstract moralities of journalism, were *en jeu*! Was it a question of coalition with America, one of the gorgeous establishments of organised mass literature that nibbled at the little, plain, sober, high-souled Review with a view to the absorption of so much good brain and blood to feed the popular Minotaur? An attack by some literary *faiseur*, some editor-publisher of a lower literary morality? This would only mean, Conrad would say, the debasing of those ideals which the editor's own published declaration had set forth, embodied in the sweet and fatuous circular which the Junta had drawn up, and which was to guide the editorship of the Review.

“The only qualification for admission to the pages of the Review will be—in the view of the Editors—either distinction of individuality or force of conviction,

either literary gifts or earnestness of purpose, whatever the purpose may be—the criterion of inclusion being the clarity of diction, the force or the illuminative value of the views expressed. What will be avoided will be superficiality of the specially modern kind which is the inevitable consequence when nothing but brevity of statement is aimed at. The *English Review* will treat its readers, not as spoiled children who must be amused by a variety of games, but with the respectful consideration due to grown-up minds whose leisure can be interested by something else than the crispness and glitter of a popular statement.”

The Editors! Indeed, it is not difficult to discover the concoctors of this gallant, grandiloquent manifesto. I see one of the co-authors of *Romance*—his guiding pen in every line—and this manifesto for a time was lived up to. No paltering with noble ideals—high and irreconcilable with popularity, unfortunately. No popular concessions! Even the rumour of such a thing in London would be, Conrad said, “like a hint of failure,” and “the Review may have to stop, but it must not fail.” Brave words, weren’t they? And it was mine to hear them! And my own timbers, deeply saturated with mean journalistic experience, shivered. The ship of the Argonauts—the good magazine that lives and remains good—had yet to be built. But, anyway, to the starters, the backers, the lenders of time and money and credit, and to the mariners that sail her, the glory and the odd hits! “*C’est bien assez*,” Conrad said.

The money of cohorts of relations—German Hueffers, Dutch Hueffers, Paris Hueffers: tremendously rich, these Paris Hueffers; good Catholics, building churches; one of them, Hermann, the banker, having married his daughter to a French duke; all agog, and pleased to

be called on to foster the English nephew's adventure with some sinews of war—was forthcoming. So was that of Arthur Pearson Marwood, the brave and gentle Yorkshire squire, the best, most loving friend an editor ever had—and wasted. He was of good birth and upbringing; *un galant homme*, as the foreigner, Conrad, conceded, though he himself had never actually sought "the man's" acquaintance—"He is more your friend than mine." The childish reservations that obtain among authors, as amongst schoolgirls! Marwood was an author, too—of a learned book on finance, and a hopeless invalid; a dandy in London and a farmer in Kent, where he would be sitting up all night with pigs and handling compost; yet his tortoiseshell brushes and trouser-presses used to electrify the editor's charwoman when he came to stay at 84 Holland Park Avenue.

Like Conrad, he must have loved the editor very much to be able to stomach the smell of the chickens, to tolerate the small, low-roofed bedroom, the general tight-packedness which did not worry the host himself, since he would have been able to sleep upon a board. But, indeed, as Conrad used to say, the devotion of Marwood to his friend was "a matter of common knowledge." Conrad raised his rugged eyebrows about it half in fun. *What* advantage did one man seek when he trotted after the other like a faithful dog? "God only knows! You, too, perhaps." Sinister. Quite unmeaning!

Mr. Marwood was seriously consulted with regard to the merits of my importation into the affairs of the Review as reader, occasional sub-editor, contributor, but above all as a "society hand" and touter for rich, influential subscribers. He took me a walk up Notting Hill Square and back, giving me some hints on his own account, as you might say. Then, having seen me home, he would return to his eager friend at 84 and wag his

head. "Yes," he would say, "yes, she is a card"—in the Bennettian sense.

For, flashing in, meteoric, business-like, was my old acquaintance of the Paris boulevards, Arnold himself, with his tuft of rich brown hair falling over his level brow of genius, demanding his price and nothing but his price, about which, however, there was to be no paltering. "Well, I always pay my contributors exactly what they ask." This was the editor's system. Sometimes they didn't ask at all, or suggested modestly the derisive sum of a couple of guineas for a forty-pound article, like Mr. Cunninghame Graham. But Arnold Bennett sensibly insisted on the forty he had well earned by "The Matador of the Five Towns."

"So there, in a manner of speaking, we all were." The quotation of one of Henry James's favourite catch-words is properly indicated in connection with the personnel of this review. Indeed, they were all there, some in the letter only—that is to say, the spirit. Thomas Hardy, who used to send stories to the *Contemporary* from Tooting when it was under the editorship of the editor's father, was sending now to his son all the way from Dorset. One never knew what literary *sommité* one might meet in that long, country-house shaped office and drawing-room combined. There was Stephen Reynolds, author of that essay in the macabre, "The Holy Mountain," lurching in unexpectedly with Bob Woolley, his sailor mate, with whom he lived at Sidmouth and let boats and rowed people about the harbour, gathering pearls from the lips of clients as they fell.

And always, as if he had walked straight up the Oxford Road from the other end of it stretching back into Wiltshire, was another great old friend of mine, the tall, eagle-faced Mr. Hudson. I had met him for the first time at a tea-party, when he was married and starving

in Southwick Crescent and I was a lively child too much brought forward for her age, allowed to "pour tea" for her mother's great friend, Mrs. Louise Chandler Moulton. It was in one of those sets of furnished apartments where that lady entertained her European friends every season. I hope I gave him enough cake. He may have been about forty-five, and his hair was already grizzled. His skin was dark, and colour was on his high cheek-bones which was not there in the last three years of his life. He appeared to my eyes so foreign-looking that I first missed, and then almost seemed to see, the earrings in his ears and the scimitar in his sash. But he was, in effect, wearing a blue serge reefer suit. He wore mostly brown in later years. That he was physically restless I would not say ; he had his long limbs in perfect control ; but as he sat poised on the music-stool which was all, in the press of celebrities, that Mrs. Moulton was able to offer a late arrival, his attitude suggested a half-tame, complaisant bird that will rest for a moment on a bough or a plinth near you with seeming confidence but is all the time summarising its way of escape from your blandishments. I felt it so much, I suppose, that, with childish bluntness, I remarked that I should not have expected to meet him there. He said simply that Mrs. Moulton had asked him, so he came. It was a way she had—a good way with these shyer, wilder, more modest celebrities she wanted to get to her parties.

Nowadays he did not look much older, and, perhaps, less hungry. And he was certainly shabbier. His dun, travel-stained coat on his arm always looked as if, like the clothes of the labourers whose lives he studied, it had been rained on, wetted and dried, and wetted again. But when he shrugged it off and laid it down he appeared as neat, as graceful, and as well dressed as John Galsworthy, and that is saying a great deal. Both tall,

with figures that a tailor would delight to dress ; but I see Mr. Galsworthy in spacious halls always, or, maybe, at a race-meeting, but not stooping, abrogating his height, like Mr. Hudson, under the eaves of a stone-cropped roof in Marten or Broad Chalke, in any old cottage room he might have taken wherein to concentrate on the malfeasant life of the cuckoo and the sadly short engagement here of that famous singer, the nightingale.

Quiet, gentle, urbane, abstracted: in both I would observe " the spirit of deathless calm," which it is a prerogative of some sorts of genius to maintain in all these stations of the mind, in this swallow flight of our life—the calm that was denied all along to the anxious ego of Conrad, who was precluded from it, perhaps, by the foreign airs that presided over his birth. Read *Sintram*, that Teutonic nightmare of De la Motte Fouqué, and you will share the image that he inspired in me, and realise the hectic, fierce, and passionate *wesen* of Conrad which pervaded 84, that justified the editor's attitude of almost cringing respect—the German's innate cult of the mysterious superman. For Conrad *was* rather mysterious ; present yet invisible, heard but in our intimate expectations ; like the great god Pan who lurked unseen. One never knew when he was about, for, if he was, he did not always show, and his friend, by order, perhaps, never said.

Once that autumn the editor and I were asked to a quiet dinner with a poetess—now Lady Dilke—and her husband, and he called for me. It was foggy, the worst day of the year. We were eating quails stewed in wine, with little green grapes in the cocottes with them. Suddenly the editor let out that he had left Conrad at home in Holland Park Avenue, sitting over the fire with a bad cold. He was not allowed to hide his light under a bushel any longer, and the telephone was used. But Conrad—on the telephone I heard his queer, foreign

voice—refused to stir out in the fog, but was going straight to bed. The editor drew a vivid picture of the great man sitting, full of aches and pains, grouting there in the lonely flat over a dying fire, and leaving even that poor comfort for the colder one of the cubicular bedroom. I thought that Joseph Conrad—his two *Christian* names, as it happens—must be very fond of Joseph Leopold to put up with the bedroom, but, then, he was used to the cabins of merchant ships.

This was probably during one of his darker days—a fit of toothache, perhaps; one of those evil hours that come to authors round about the *enfantement* of a masterpiece. For they are all to be masterpieces, and that is why the merest, tiniest essay costs the writer of it so dear. Conrad would think nothing of writing to me or the editor a letter headed with, or in the corner, "Pray for me these days!" And we knew at once it was a question of literary parturition.

For the curse of Eve lies very heavy on *les vrais gens de lettres*, and they do not always get even the apple. "In pain and travail shalt thou bring forth"—and, what is worse, hate the bantling, take a dislike to the infant that perhaps, instead of smiling up at you, appears to be stillborn. Hear the cries, heart-rending, that go up from their several desks! Inspiration dead and Imagination yet working in *le vide*! This suggests a form of torture that no one but a potential mechanician could have devised for himself. Moans over the damnable worry of making a start with stuff in which one doesn't believe! But, all the same—damn it!—"one goes on spinning out of oneself like a disillusioned spider in a gale." I am sure that particular author must, like his friend Huddie, have watched long by some worm-eaten outhouse door a hapless spider's gyrations, to have felt like saying that!

"How to guard myself against the most deplorable

9  
her at once under escort, direct" (underlined) "to the prison-hospital in Kiev, where she will be treated as her case demands."  
"For God's sake, Mr. B., see that your sister goes away punctually on the day. Don't give me this work to do with a woman—and with one of your family too. I simply cannot bear to think of it."

He was absolutely wringing his hands. My uncle looked at him in silence. 7

"Thank you for(warning me. ~~but~~ assure you that even if she were dying she would be carried out to the carriage."

"Yes—indeed—and what difference would it make—~~you~~<sup>hard</sup>—  
to Kiev or ~~anywhere~~: For she would have to go—~~Orders~~<sup>Orders</sup>—to ~~us~~<sup>us</sup> death."

And mind, Mr. B., I will ~~be~~<sup>be</sup> on the day, not that I doubt your promise but because I must. I have got to. Duty. All the same my trade is ~~unfit~~<sup>unfit</sup> not fit for a dog since some of you will persist in ~~making~~<sup>making</sup> and all of you ~~have~~<sup>have</sup> got to suffer for it."

This is the reason why he was ~~starting~~ <sup>flaw</sup> in an open three-horse

stray pulled up between the house and the great gates, ~~which~~ I regret not being able to give up his name to the ~~public press~~ scorn of all believers in the rights of conquest and the reprehensibly sensitive guardian of Imperial greasiness. On the other hand, I am in a position to state the name of the Governor-General who signed the order with the marginal note "to be carried out to the letter" in his own handwriting. The gentleman's name was Bezak. A ~~great~~ dignitary, an energetic ~~man~~ the idol for a time of the Russian Patriotic Press.

- Each generation has its memories.





of failures is my difficulty—the thing itself my haunting fear and the necessity of writing, my despair.” There was hard-up-ness . . . there was gout . . . but I think that toothache has a lot to do with such an exclamation as “Really, I’m not fit to live!” Conrad especially would have nothing done to his teeth if he could help it. No author, I have noticed, can easily bear the file. The forceps, perhaps, and gas, but the file is crueller than death, and it was, indeed, what killed one author that I know of—or, rather, his avoidance of it.

There seem to have been always such things as authors’ special dentists and doctors, whose mission it has been to attend to the fraternity and their families. There was Dr. Ogle, of Cavendish Square, and Dr. Quain, who attended the Hunts and the Millais families, there was Mr. Pootz or Deutz—I have spelt his name wrong, and perhaps it is as well, for he was responsible for a great deal of harm done to the grinders of Robert Browning and Leighton and to my mother’s, who execrated him.

The editor and Conrad and I about this time had the same doctor—“Tebby-Tebb,” as we called the queer, clever, weedy man who stooped so for despair, not laziness. Himself he could not save. But you called him and he came, hasting, his baggy umbrella in front of him, the flaps of his greatcoat nearly touching the ground, looking like Santa Claus or the Old Clo’ Man bringing the babies. He brought several Pre-Raphaelite babies into the world and one of Conrad’s. He was a magician, a wonder-doctor, as one would have expected from his quack-like appearance, white-complexioned, blue-eyed, bewildered. . . . He took your case home to think out a cure for it—keeping it a terrible time. Say you had something the matter with your fingers? Weeks hence he would reappear with a bag, put some unknown drug into your shoulder, and, hey presto! you were

cured. But how could a man like that make money? He was always poor—and likely to remain so.

And for literary accouchements we all had the same practitioner, "Jy B"—"The Pinker of Agents," so Conrad the Paladin called him. Conrad was generous, for Pinker held most of us, and especially Conrad, in the hollow of his hand. Had he not been a dear he could have worked untold mischief among the manuscripts and worried some of us out of our lives. Pinker was my director as well, and had he managed to dispose of those three short stories I sent him Mr. Wells would not have sent me to the *English Review* with them, and I should never have become intimate with the editor of it, nor with Conrad. So there it is! Peace be with his bones!

This association—Damon and Pythias-like,—tender and affectionate though shot with furies, arrogancies, misunderstandings, scoldings and ill-acceptances of them: of Joseph Leopold and Joseph Conrad—subsisted until the Great War, when Conrad and I were left to correspond about our precious pawns lent to England. It began with *Romance* and their association in the writing of it. The birth of *Romance* was a legend by the time I came to know Conrad. I used to hear how they had lived together for some time at The Pent, a tumbledown farm under the shadow of a great cliff in the South Country, where the kitchen has a wavy floor like the pavement of St. Mark's, and perhaps for the same reason; where the man who ran the farm had his oozy midden in front of the doorstep; how Walter Crane, to whom they for a time rented it, actually ventured to cut about the sixteenth-century door lintel so as to get a Walter Crane Children's Book motto over it; how they would not choose to dine together, because the carrying-out of Conrad's high views of the proper correction of children might offend the editor, who believed in letting his

infants ride over *him*. So they met only in the intervals of what Conrad called "vile but indispensable sensual gorging of grey matter." I have seen that wavy floor, that motto over the door, that midden. I thought of taking The Pent once, but the ridges might have tripped me up, and the smell of decaying straw outside disgusted me.

There these two, with their families, strove and sorrowed and rejoiced together over the impersonal—if you will have it so—works of the spirit, in which they really and truly lived. They sighed together over the paucity of the reviews of *Romance*; they jubilated when things looked up a little. That they were both in their second editions—" *mon cher, savez vous ?* "—Conrad wrote to the editor, who was in America meeting Samuel Sidney McClure, much drawn by the puissant charm of him. And then there was a slight reverse, but Conrad bid his pal buck up, declaring that he had by no means given up hope of seeing "the thing" soar into the lofty altitudes of prosperity one day soon. He "quite thought" it would run to ten thousand or so.

*Or so !*

And there were scoldings, too—what we used to call *rixes*. A sight of Conrad was the plum that the editor was in the habit of extending to "Well done, thou good and faithful servant!" and for once, perhaps, he had pledged Conrad's time and amenity too far or too malapropos.

"What do you mean? *What* the devil *do* you mean?" No, Mr. Conrad knew nothing of the editor's relations with, his friendship with, or his regard for, Miss C. Miss C. had been described as an American lady whom the editor wanted him to see—something to do with McClure's magazine. She wanted a story from Conrad and "God knows what" from somebody else: intended descending on the great man on a certain day, arriving

at Smeeth by the 10.45 and leaving in the afternoon. The fierce author shouts that he won't have it. The proper thing for the lady to do was to ask for an interview. It is obvious she did not ask because she did not want it, but wanted to call on him casually. And Conrad was not to be treated like that! This was not the way to serious business! He was a man who could not afford to be disturbed by casual visitors. . . .

The American lady did not get her interview. Indeed, I do not think that Conrad ever cared very much for the idea of America.

But the editor of the *English Review* was pursued by the *feu follets* of American participation in his magazine as long as the Review lasted. Conrad bade him detach his mind from these fanciful undertakings and remember that the fair fame of an honourable attempt lay open to him, if not an unqualified success. He certainly had the first.

I often wonder if S. S. M. could really have helped; if the editor was not, after all, more a man of the world than Conrad, and had he got the rights of it? The great American monopolist editor and publisher was a personage. He was in London about the time of the first number.

I got an invitation: "Cortège will leave the Savoy about nine o'clock. . . . I wouldn't disturb you so cavalierly if S. S. M. wasn't so useful an acquaintance." Naturally. I was to come at half-past nine to his box at the Empire, where Kyasht was dancing.

I soon gathered that he, the editor, and Percival Gibbon had been dining at the Savoy, and that there had been a three-cornered row and the dinner-rolls and even knives had flown freely. Samuel Sidney may not have taken part; he gave me the impression of strength and contained violence very rare in an American. Perhaps Frocess, Co. Antrim, had something to do with the *trempe*

of his rather sinister personality. He seemed like a large wild beast kept quiet by food at stated times. He did not listen—at least, not to me—but treated me as a merely inconsiderable member of the editor's literary harem. At all events, I placed no stories with him, though I allowed him to make me rather conspicuous. It wasn't so bad as making me drink tea in the theatre, but he did buy chocolates, and, between the acts, placed one between my lips . . . and again. Having been told "to be nice to him," I quietly held my mouth open like a child in the nursery. The editor had bought me a Teddy Bear glove from a man at the door as we came in. We all got into a four-wheeler, and they dropped me at my house, going on to finish the night at 84. What was left of it after that, the editor informed me, he had passed in tears. So much for an *accaparant* personality!

Conrad was very sarcastic about this party, asking if the great man had, perchance, offered to buy up the Review and the editor, lock, stock, and barrel, including 84, the shop downstairs, and the adjacent Tube station, so as to transplant the whole show to U.S.A., and with it whip creation, break things, etc. "I shouldn't wonder." But he hoped that all the American had got from the editor was a soothing smile? He could not understand how the editor could take such a prestigious person seriously, or why the editor insisted on giving "me this stuff that makes me furious and unhappy."

Unless words were wind, facts mist, the confidence that the editor had placed in him a mere caprice of fancy, and unless "an absolute loyalty of thought on my part *contra mundum*" gave no privilege, then, indeed, Conrad had no right to warn him. He always said, after one of these candid outbursts, that he knew well that the editor would dismiss all his objections of every sort with one

wave of the hand, but still he persisted. It cost him much. Every intervention in the editor's affairs, domestic, literary or business, he said, ensured him at least four unhappy days, and there was no reason, that he knew of, why he should be wretched "except from sheer affection."

The truth was that Conrad was awfully fond of the editor, and could not bear to see him "prodigal of toil and talent," and making a mess of things generally, for want of that sympathetic imagination of which one who knew him best had accused him. On the other hand, the attitude of the editor to Conrad was a monument of humility, whatever the wife of his bosom may say.

Conrad and James were, more or less, our mentors—interchangeable. They both sermonised us both. I had known Henry James longer than the editor had, but he had the advantage of me as regards Conrad, and I think he loved Conrad more than I loved James. Henry James was kinder, less selfish; Conrad was ruder, and more lovable. The editor adored Conrad. I never heard him speak of Conrad without the most reverent affection, though he did allow himself to chip at him sometimes to me. In matters of literature his attitude was servile, positively. To James he posed merely as *le jeune homme modeste*, but his native arrogance appeared to be completely obliterated when Conrad was in the room. He imitated him, even to the point of cultivating in himself some one or other of Conrad's phobias. All great men have phobias. He used to say he suffered from agoraphobia—or was it claustrophobia? They seem to me very interchangeable. A breakdown in the street or a breakdown in a drawing-room, the market-place or the field? The Lake District is less lonely than a long street in Bloomsbury where I have seen the editor weaken and totter. These two confessed to sharing "queer

sensations of being no longer in this world " as they sat writing. " Heart thumps, head swims ! "—" It's funny, but startling." The thought of a journey made either of them tremble. " I shirk going out into the road. . . . I get over-excited and worried with new faces. . . . Something peculiar with me ! "

Not so very peculiar for such cattle as these ! How one recognises the symptoms of nervous breakdown that assail all men who subsist on their own nervous energy, and, peradventure, keep a family with it ! To feel, as soon as a journey is threatened, that one is not coming back again, is an elementary sensation of the kind. I always feel it myself. And suicide ! Every author thinks of suicide when he cannot get *le mot juste*, or is spinning a web of fiction like the spider in a gale ; to adopt Conrad's expressive phrase, " making an effort for copy or die ! " It seems simpler almost to die. " The latter the easier feat—and so beautifully final ! "

The interchange of these *Morituri te Salutant* is just the waving of the arms resorted to after an effort of conversation, the awful yawn of satiety, the sense of virtue gone out of one.

The doyen of the Review, Henry James, lived mostly in London now, " chaperoning himself." *Modeste Mignon* I called him, after Balzac. He never, so far as I know, honoured the office—which was also a drawing-room—with his presence. I don't believe he ever set foot in it. The purlieus of literature were not for him ; he preferred to live among his raw material in marble halls in the wealthy North ; on Aubusson carpets in Paris. But he used to come to see me in my house, nicely *montée* for entertaining, and to any one of my three clubs. He delighted in my Saturdays at the Socialist New Reform Club, where the members consumed eggs beaten up in glasses, where the walls were of a duck-coloured green, and the three windows

after dark enjoyed a view of the glittering pharos advertising Sir Thomas Dewar's excellent whiskey outlined on a screen of Whistler blue. Mr. Bernard Shaw appropriately tenants that room now.

It was quite unnecessary to be careful to whom you introduced H. J., for if you were too particular, took too much care of him, you might lose him a chance of meeting a Mona Maltravers or a Princess Casamassima.

Nobody bored him; he took care of that. That immunity was included in the careful chaperoning of himself for which he was noted. I used to suffer, as other people did who told him anything that might amuse him, from the summarily truncated anecdote. He would hold up a story as soon as he had got all he needed out of it; extend a finger—"Thank you, I've got as much—all I want"—and leave you with the point of your anecdote on your hands. You consoled yourself with the reflection that he might have perhaps got another *Turn of the Screw* out of your relation of some childish aberration, or some more *Spoils of Poynton* from your reminiscence of your old North Country aunt.

My rattling, roaring, social existence seemed to hold all sorts of queer lures and baits for him. I was his "purple patch"—the Medusa head by which he envisaged the less refined happenings of life and made his little cautious descents into reality, the violet ray in his so pure spectrum. I don't believe that in all his days he ever came nearer to passion, to the stark human nature of things, as at that time when I tried to force him down into the arena to fight for me. I ought to have known better. I had had a hint. Once I mentioned a dead friend whom I had loved very much—and I actually used the word of awe in this connection. It was at breakfast in Lamb House. H. J. left his poached egg on cereals and, rising with a little nervous cough,

courteously drew my attention to the picture of his mother which hung over the sideboard!

Conrad, H. G. Wells, and Henry James formed, shall I say, the South Coast Triumvirate whose best work, generously afforded, "made" the *English Review*. H. G. did not come to the office much. At least, I never saw him there. The editor he "knew at home," riding over from Sandgate to Aldington on his bicycle and getting a drink of the mead which the editor brewed according to the best mediæval recipes. How often have I heard the story of H. G.'s profound appreciation of a glass of it—his foolish request for a second—the mounting of his bicycle—the wanton wave of the hand—the nettly ditch bed till morning. It may be true. I am sure Mr. Wells will not care to contradict it.

The editor had many "ploys" besides his job of writing novels and poetry. When he was not engaged in making his friends tipsy he would talk to old men in the village and old women—the immortalised "Meary" of Bonnington. He would sit up all night to see the ghost at Aldington Knoll, or cycle over to Rye to call on the Master or the cranky Stephen Crane. On rainy days he looked across at France and wrote wonderful poetry about it. A beautiful life! Why did he abandon it for the mud flats of Notting Hill, the rows of Victorian villas turned into shops, the stress, financial and otherwise, the many-peopled office, the agitating coming and going . . . ?

Our mutual passion for women's suffrage was a lien between the editor and me, and the day came when I was called upon to collect funds for the Cause. Miss May Sinclair and myself were drafted off to hold collecting-boxes for three whole days in High Street Station. We were to pick up our wooden boxes at a stay-shop near by. The woman there had kindly consented to keep them against our appearance at three o'clock, but

she was very anxious for us to shut the door, hide the boxes under our cloaks, and keep them there till we got out of the shop, lest she lost custom through her favouring of the suffragettes. The arcade that led up to the station was not, at that time, a gay panorama of ladies' hats, but a bare expanse on either side like the walls of a tank and perhaps that aided the terrible impression that was ours when, by concerted arrangement, May and I flashed our boxes out. Much has been said of our heroism in "standing outside to beg," and I fancy she felt as I did—as if we had suddenly been stripped naked, with a cross-sensation of being drowned in a tank and gasping for breath. We had asked all our friends and editors and readers to come and cheer us up as we stood there pilloried, and they backed us up splendidly. Mr. John Galsworthy sauntered along and tipped us immeasurably and gallantly, and Mr. Laurence Housman and Mr. Ford Madox Hueffer—everyone in fact, who wished the movement well.

Later on came the terrible Albert Hall Meeting, when a girl near me suddenly slashed out with a whip and cut the face of the steward, and that of one of my friends who was trying to silence or carry her out. Mrs. Meynell and Mrs. C. F. G. Masterman and I, all three ardent for the Cause, sat in a box and wept to see our friends so mauled in the arena below—Miss Evelyn Sharp hustled, and Mr. Henry Nevinson carried out by three stewards as stiff as if he was being levitated, while Mr. Lloyd George, friendly too, dabbing his eternal handkerchief to his mouth, was on principle not permitted to speak. I, unfortunately, had friends in both camps. I went to a party of Mrs. Godfrey Benson's, and two suffragettes preceded me upstairs to where Dorothea stood beside Mr. Asquith. I heard the usual slogan, "Votes for Women," and I have been told that my hostess blew a police whistle which she had concealed somewhere about

her person, but I did not hear it. The two offending ladies were kindly escorted downstairs by Mr. William Woodhouse, and given a nice supper—unbeknown, I suppose, to his hostess. But I said something to Mr. Asquith, as in duty bound, when I shook hands :

“ I say, why don't you give it us ? ”

And he smiled as he always did when tackled on this subject, as he smiled—nay, laughed—when, at Lady Pearson's, some wag fastened our chairs together at supper with a dinner napkin.

In December, after many and many a contretemps, the first number of the *English Review* actually came out, and Hardy's wonderful poem, which fronted it, excited adverse criticism. Morals were still as they were before the war. “ Improper ”—that word of horror and awe—could still be applied by serious critics to a masterpiece which described, surely in the most moving stanzas ever penned, the feelings of a mother who finds that, in all innocence, she has murdered her daughter “ uncalled for ” by administering one of those home-brewed potions commonly used for her purpose in our sophisticated country-side. And *Tono-Bungay*—where I figure, so he advised me, as Beatrice, the pert, aristocratic lure of the enquiring, pathetic, and pushful Wells boy who was the hero.

And to celebrate the birth of the Review, I suppose, there was a Yuletide festival lasting nearly a week, according to the manner of the ancients, at Holland Park Avenue—plum puddings, Yule logs, chestnut-roasting and snapdragon ; orgies of stickiness, and Father Christmas's beard getting entangled in the candle sconces. A letter was dictated to me for Stephen Reynolds, to tell him that the children and Fräulein were coming up, and that if he'd “ like to come, a nice little bed would be made up for him on the leads,” for the children would

monopolise the best bedroom—their fond father would bestow his length in the cubicle. That was the sort of privation he never minded. The plank bed at Brixton was doubtless no harder, so Elizabeth Schultz told me, than the bed at 84 that was hers later, and she took all the drawing-room cushions to mollify it.

This reception Conrad had proposed to attend if he could put a boot on and “scrape up the shillings for his fare.” I don’t know if he came, for I was not invited to this so exclusively young party, though I attended the one later in Christmas week, which was for grown-up people, the children having been put to bed early. I was mindful of that, and as I and my niece went up to the dining-room to take off our cloaks, past their door, I said to her :

“Don’t talk. The children are asleep.”

Two voices shouted in crushing juvenile contempt :

“Oh, no, we’re *not* !”

I don’t know why they were sent to bed, because we grown-ups were made to play the most childish of games—Clumps, Honey-pots, not stopping short at Hunt-the-slipper. I know we all seemed to be sitting on the floor—Mr. Belloc—or wasn’t he?—V. H., the Radford girls, Mrs. Garnett and her boy, who has lately won three prizes with his *Lady into Fox*. There was no one to curb the editor and his German instinct for games. Wonderful paper frogs that raced, and other mechanical toys that seemed, but were not, perhaps, unworthy of a great mind unbending, and the Review was launched.

*The Good Editor—Manuscripts in the Coalbin—Mr. Chandler's gorged Rabbits—The Flowering of D. H. Lawrence—The Futurist Poison Bottle—The Proposal—"Will you—if?"—"The long, long fight"—Accept—The Beauty and Professor Ker—Selsey—"Blood upon the buttercups"—Beauty ministers to Genius—"The most unselfish man in the world"—The Eternal Error—Women cannot Save—A False Assumption—A Bid for Happiness—Neck or Nothing—Importation of Elizabeth Schultz—With Thomas Hardy to Aldeburgh—Ghost Stories at Edward Clodd's—Professor Gilbert Murray and Mrs. Belloc Lowndes—The "coon" singer at Harrington Mann's—The Vampire Review—The Editor and Beauty's Mother—Sheringham and Aubrey Beardsley's Sister—The first Lawyer's letter—Cranford in Normandy—Home—Too Good to be Careful—Charing Cross—The Angry Goddess—Appearances—Parallel with Violet Fane—The author of "Isabel Carnaby" and Mr. Parnell's Drain Pipe.*

I SEEMED to myself, by 1909, to have become quasi-mistress of that office and all the strands of its business, even the details of its housekeeping passing through my willing but inapt fingers. The editor, the best editor, *quâ* editor, that has ever been, seemed like a babe unborn in the guiding of mere worldly matters. Time and space were nothing to him, except when it was a matter of proofs and printing. And then he drove both printers and compositors wild. Anyone could "do" him, and for the present, I think, did not, respecting the pathetic inefficiency of the great man, except when he had a pen in his hand.

He seemed like an infant in charge of a motor-car, living in a home that was not a home, but the shell merely of his great venture, uncomfortable, inadequate for all special needs, and yet forced by his will to maintain them. About it there was, of course, no trace of feminine

daintiness, except for Hermosa who with her own fair hands tidied up, dusted, and swept the room where she worked, and sometimes even filled the coal-scuttle. But she went away early, and some days did not come at all. Needless to say, the editor preferred to sit in the cold rather than get fuel out of the yard himself. He was said to take the electric lamp to bed with him by way of a hot-water bottle. As for his meals, his Mrs. Miller was fond of buying ironclads of fat, slices of cooked ham from the neighbouring pork-butcher's, slabs of parchment called piecrust, for her master's lunch, so that, for the most part, he preferred to feed, and take his friends to feed, in the little back room of the pastrycook's next door.

Tall, haggard, patient, and urbane, coughing and eating his heart out! That was the effect he produced on my little niece, who, with more of motherly instinct than I, used to go in and take away the linen and socks to mend, and buy him hot-water bottles that he never filled.

I found myself, without exactly knowing how it had come about, to have adopted with her the dangerous vocation of "minding," mending, and consoling a genius by day, while by night, even, our time was not our own.

I had got my mother to have the new telephone installed at home and an extra switch in my bedroom, and so incurred the plague of being wakened in the dead of night by what H. G. Wells in *Boon* calls the editor's "languid, plangent tenor," bewailing his literary woes, insinuating, indicating misery on the electric current that, like Swinburne's stream, has come to be the vehicle for all the misery under the sun and must be a constant picnic for curious operators. He would describe with eloquence the occurrence of what Pearl Craigie used to call "quagmires," literary and household—the

misdeeds of Mr. Collinson the compositor, and Mr. Chandler the landlord—two powers that were—proofs not to hand, and Quarter Day. . . .

Mr. Chandler, vestryman, greengrocer, fish-salesman, fruiterer and poulterer, and caterer for the Grosvenor Gallery Restaurant, who lived below, looked like a good old English gentleman and behaved like a family butler to his tenant, to whom, for form's sake, he was constantly giving notice and as constantly withdrawing it. I think his "Fairy," as he called his large, handsome, and stout wife, had a *tendresse* for the quiet, patient and long-suffering literary gentleman upstairs, and flew to cash cheques for him at a moment's notice. But of course the Chandler *ménage* had to live, and did, very well.

The moment the Review was started the usual course of friends, contributors, and would-be contributors attended the editor's levees. He was out for new blood—for talent if not for genius. He printed, so I believe, the first articles of Norman Douglas, Gilbert Cannan, Wyndham Lewis, and D. H. Lawrence.

That *was* a Moment! The first blush—the blowing—of Mr. Lawrence's flower of genius. I was, at that time, reader. The editor handed me some manuscript poems written in pencil and very close, which had come to him from a young schoolmistress in the Midlands. She said that her sweetheart was schoolmaster in the same school. He was the son of a miner, and not very strong, but she had copied out some of his poems, and would the editor give them a glance?

They were perfectly wonderful. The editor was beside himself with pleasure at his discovery. Hermosa typed them, and they went in in chunks. Letters were exchanged, and the young poet, bored and weary of his life, teaching at Addiscombe, called at the office. He was very like a board-school boy grown to man's estate.

He had the head of a child—the yellow hair with a “feather” at the back, much as if a school-mate had been having a game with it. His eyes, if I mistake not, were very blue, his lips very red, and his face very white—sinisterly so, for he looked consumptive.

His manner was gentle, modest, and tender, in a way I did not associate with his upbringing. His father was a “butty man,” of a certain rank among miners, and I found that he, his sisters, and his sweetheart met every Saturday evening round the fire to read Verlaine and Baudelaire, while commissioned not to allow his mother’s loaves to burn in the oven. He was more conversant with decadent poetry than I or the editor, and that is saying a great deal, in fact, I think he had studied it too deeply.

I was in the habit of bringing to my mother’s house anyone who was likely to amuse her; and who but interesting people wrote for the Review? One day when dear Byles, the editor’s best friend, and to be mine, had just got back from Japan, D. H. Lawrence brought his fiancée to lunch. She was like a brown bird, bright-eyed, her little head covered with curling russet locks like feathers. Obviously, when at home, a dashing young party. Here she was obviously nervous, but pulled it off all right, though there was a snag when she turned the russet head and asked my maid, who was handing the potatoes, in a speaking whisper whether she should keep her gloves on. I never saw her again, but I had a great deal of correspondence with her, and she consulted me about the publication of her own book, counter-blast to her ex-sweetheart’s version of the part played by *Miriam*. The manuscript has, I believe, never been published, and I cannot think why—perhaps because she is happily married!

After the *English Review* was well started in January the editor’s courts were thronged socially. One never

knew what social figure or other would be suddenly and secretly bitten with the lust of authorship. And the Review was "It," as Mr. Wells had foretold. The editor gave parties—I lent my maid and spoons, or he hired the ex-butler of Sir Frederick Leighton, who had ushered in Queen Victoria to see the President of the Royal Academy. In the afternoons the office-drawing-room was filled with what Mr. Douglas Sladen used to designate on his invitations as "pretty women and brainy men." Many of the women were political—Lady Barlow and Lady Low. Present were Sidney Brooks, Percival Gibbon, Hilaire Belloc, the Garnetts, some of the Wertheimer sisters, the Rossetti girls, my beautiful school-fellow, Agnes Grove, who always told me she had sat to Mr. Hardy for "Tess." . . . There was the first Lady St. Davids, the handsome Jewess, and there was Christabel Pankhurst, looking like a young and pretty Queen Victoria.

For the men, I have already specified them, but I have forgotten Baerlein, most faithful of friends. There was handsome Miss Ada Potter, who thought so highly of the dramatic possibilities of *The Fifth Queen Crowned* that she put it on for one day at the Kingsway, herself playing Queen Catherine Howard, and getting to support her, Hearn, the living image of Henry VIII in the picture.

Only, like Cinderella's pumpkin carriage and its mice footmen, all this glory vanished at dusk, and the editor was left with a few broken sandwiches and half cups of tea, with which nothing could be done till morning, sitting by his dying fire and an empty coal-scuttle that he was too lazy to go out and replenish, or thumping his piano and shouting, "Madam, will you walk?" for his own dreary amusement and company. Mrs. Chandler, in her room below, who pitied him, has often told me this.

I am not implying that the editor was friendless. His mother and his sister and Russian brother-in-law, who

had been a member of the first Duma and twice imprisoned for a term of years in Peter and Paul, used to come now and then. His cousins, the Rossetti girls, sometimes paid him a visit, but I don't think old William Rossetti ever came or that the editor ever went to him. I think that the editor had borrowed too many of his rare books and forgotten to return them.

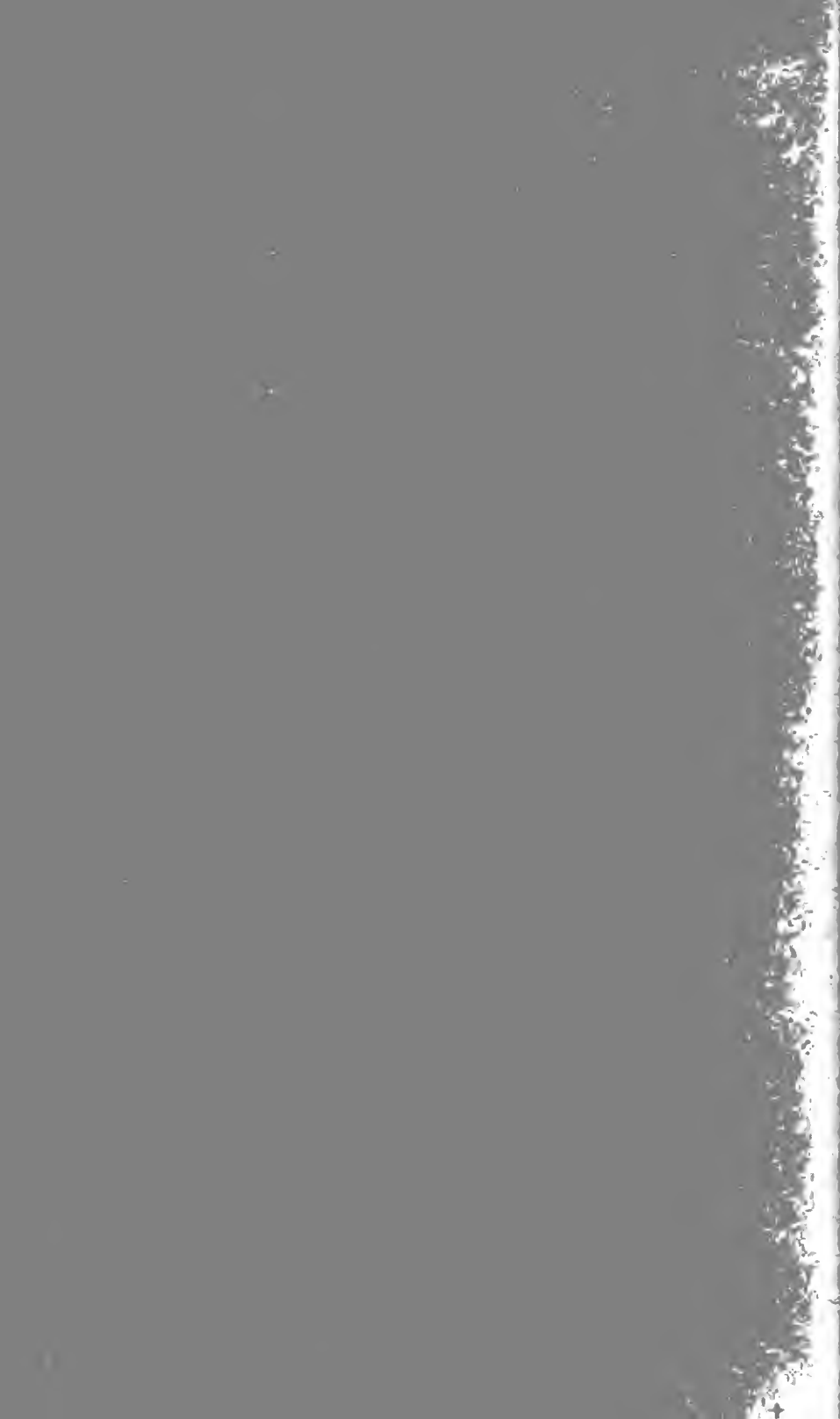
A cheerful girl was his sister-in-law, Mary Martindale, who shared a flat with his mother in Blythe Road. She was beautiful in a simple way, like clear water and primroses, had a ringing laugh which she used very often, rather like the cuckoo's note, a raw call of earliest spring, of which she reminded me. The Martindales were a very handsome family. Dr. Martindale looks like a Spanish grandee. And there was Hermosa, handsome and cheerful too. But naturally these ladies cleared off about six o'clock.

There was another *habituée* who paid her visits chiefly in the evenings. I do not know how she occupied herself in the day—manicuring her nails, I think! She was of the lazy, Slav type, a protégée of the editor, and she called him "Păpă."

He had rescued her in some sort of way, so I made out from his romantic disquisitions on Elizabeth Schultz. He was, like other romantics, tainted with the lust of rescue-work, and he had picked up this young person in the Empire lounge, and had suggested to her that she should come and be respectable. He always said that she was the thirteenth to whom he had made this proposition. This particular girl agreed. He had been drawn to her by the queerest notion—that the soul of his first-born who died had, somehow or other, found its way into her body. She was gentle, shy, faint . . . innocuous, like a flake of tarnished snow; her white, heavy moon-face, with its short Calmuck nose, wide red mouth, and loops of black hair falling over a rather brutish



MARY MARTINDALE



forehead, spoke of her Tartar descent. She came from Königsburg.

I had not then his confidence, but it seemed to me that, during the long-delayed tarrying of Spring that occurred that year, when fogs lasted well into March and April, that the Hand of the Lord lay heavy on the editor of the *English Review* in some way. It might have been the journal, which was going very well, but was costing its founder his life's blood in the way of money. Already there had been talk of making it into a company, and I think the German backers and relations were being invited to put more money into it. I heard talk of Uncle Friedrich and Aunt Antonia. Heavy interest was being paid on their loans . . . there may have been gifts. . . .

Or it might have been the suddenly provoked quarrel with his beloved Marwood which was affecting the Editor's feelings as well as the future of the Review. He had been unkind to Marwood, and had visited what might have been want of tact, or even grave failure of discretion, on a faithful adherent "with Olympian severity," so his mentors warned him. "You seem to have done some crushing!" was Conrad's opinion. Poor Marwood was a nervous man, full of feeling, but not endowed by nature with the means of letting off steam possessed by the two doyens of the pen. "*Un galant homme tout bonnement!*" so Conrad, the great, the generous, nobly testified—even in the moment of petty irritation that drew from him nervous stagey phrases, admiring this wondrous dog-like attachment of the English country gentleman.

Marwood was a mathematician, a philosopher, an economist. Perhaps he was too clever to look for, too simple to realise, the capacity for petty jealousies implicit

in the psychology of these great *névroses*, the incidence of that earnest regard—virile, strong, permanent, vitiated by storms and misunderstandings—which men of the same *métier*, which is their unique preoccupation, come to have for one another, and which is far more causative of quarrels than any which may subsist between man and woman. Marwood, in his noble simplicity, was caught between two deeply sophisticated personalities, and went about looking ill and unhappy. It is ill meddling between two of a trade, two with the diapason set alike and evened in a common endeavour.

Oh, these weird nervous systems of writers, harassed by the lust of production, their sensibilities sharpened, their powers of perception duplicated and reduplicated, like the lens of the biggest telescope in the world, that a cloudy night yet will render useless, how they suffer ! And how determined they are in their moments of sanity to “keep out of things”—other people’s things ! Other people’s sex complications especially. Mentors they may like to be ; as mentors they may be adopted, but with our affairs of the heart they prefer to have nothing to do, except to listen and gather copy, perhaps. An advisory board for Ethics or Behaviour—yes, but even Henry James, the precise and old-fashioned, refused to moralise on or connect in any way Morals with the perplexing, irrational, untidy passion of Love.

Once I spoke of Love by name to Henry James and got, sweetly enough, snubbed. As for Conrad, he got quite cross when once, *en tête-à-tête*, I invited him to take some interest in that sort of thing for my sake. He spoke to me just as he used to speak to the editor, asking, with lifted eyebrows and savage twist of the upper lip : “What object, what purpose, could be served by the creation of equivocal situations—juggling with the realities of life ? ” That was just what Love was, and nothing else, the creator of equivocal situations. Art was the

only reality of life. He himself did not go in for love-affairs, except of course, the master affair of all. He did not envisage the fact, I suppose, that other literary existences, imagining themselves capable of including more than one, are ruined by the swelter entailed by plurality of emotions.

It was never any use asking him to take sides, to speak to this or that person, to engineer *raccommodements*. The very atmosphere of arrangement and possible compromise seemed terrible to him: "I can't breathe in situations that are not clear." He abhorred plots and suspicions; "They are neither in my nature, my tradition, or my experience." "Happy man!" I said. "No, I am not *fine* enough for them," he maintained whose work it was to create situations, not unravel them—especially in his society *intime*; and with a lovely shrug and a smile, as of an infant at bay, he murmured:

"We are just a pair of silly innocents."

So they were. So are all the devoted men and women who work and have their being in the world of ideas, using human substance merely as a dummy to hang theories on, to demonstrate world philosophy, world truths. . . . The first author was a savage who set up to exemplify his notion of causation by an Old Man with a white beard, calling him God the Father, and figuring the brooding Spirit as the white bird of meekness.

The worst of it is that authors will not live like Simeon Stylites, but will have relations gathered round them, and instead of posing on a nice quiet pillar, go to live in the country for peace. Peace! Village life, as I have found it, always means less peace than a sword. The white geese on village greens cackle, the village grocer gossips, the timid, derelict female souls for whom London fight is too much make up for the want of a circulating library by Many Inventions. . . . And so we get poor Conrad complaining bitterly of the usual thing, to most

of us, here, there, and everywhere. Village *potins*, three-cornered rows, wigs upon the green or on the marsh. And he in Ham Street is all spikes at once, and his friend a mush of indecision and dyspepsia in London. He objects to be warned of "tensions in certain quarters," of "intrigues (*vulgo* : lies)." But when is there not tension in village communities? He takes refuge in proverbial palliatives. No, nobody is as black as he is painted. He won't give up anybody to please anybody. Poor Marwood calls, looking very ill. "He won't live long!" so Conrad, with the ground-swell of irritation still on him, says cruelly. And the Review loses a good backer. And *Alles ist hin* for a time at 84. It is even insinuated that it is my fault. Genius is ever saying, "*J'accuse*." That is its privilege.

I granted that privilege, for just then I too was singing very small. Things were "riding" me, too. And I had just heard of the death, far away in Switzerland, of such a one as we women, roughly, and tenderly speaking, choose to call "the only man we have ever loved." Also, my uncle had just died in his house a few yards away from the office. I was with my aunt a great deal, and I had to attend her at the funeral in the dreary church in Kensington Park Road, where the music is in the Gregorian mode, than which there is no greater assault on the emotions. Even a dog, listening to it, will howl. And I knew what it would be like, and, prepared to proffer some obscure reason or other, I rushed into the office of the *English Review* on my way there, in my unaccustomed black, for what ends, to quote Conrad, God only knew. To gain comfort from the editor's aloofness, perhaps! I got my comfort, but it was cold, a reach-me-down, for there was a cab at the door and the luggage being taken off, and I found the children there with Miss Edmee Van De Noot, and

so appropriative of their father that not a word could I get from him. He looked a different man for the moment.

We had got some idea of comforting each other for the slings and arrows of literary fate, at least that is the way we used to speak of it. He was by way of himself preparing little dinners for one friend or perhaps two. They were *à la Russe*. One evening, when I arrived at half-past six, I found him upstairs in the little kitchen, with his nice Japanese silk dressing-gown over his shabby morning suit to preserve it from the grease of the frying-pan. And, after all, the cutlets were burned. Some meringues from the confectioner's next door followed. He liked sweet things better than I—eternal child that he was! Then we went down, and he began to tell me the plot of his new book he was writing, for which a certain Sophie Delmas stood in his mind for the heroine. As he read I looked at him critically. He was no longer so dreadfully thin, since the cough had gone, but he was white like a stick of asparagus grown in a cellar; at any rate, rather pasty. He smoked incessantly, and it made his teeth black. His cuffs wanted "trimming," and I made a note to tell my niece to bring a pair of scissors.

It was rather cold. The light was not good. Shadows were encroaching on the little oasis of light in which we sat, he on a hideous red plush Victorian arm-chair, the one blot on the room, and I on a *chaise-longue* that an invalid had used. The depression was as one might say of a fog—so thick you could cut it with a knife. He talked of suicide in the intervals of reading, until I could hardly bear it, of having insured his life for a large sum which his children were to get after his death, but if he committed suicide they would not get it. How to manage? He had it all ready. The great 'buses rolling

down the hill from Notting Hill Gate went straight past his door—I could hear them as he spoke—and he would throw himself under one of them after having taken poison, and no one would think of having an autopsy of the mangled corpse . . . and so on. . . .

I was distressed, and yet unbelieving. People who talk of suicide are the last persons to commit it. The best thing I could do would be to go home. He would not see me home ; he never did, because Elizabeth Schultz always came at twelve for half an hour's talk, to tell him what she had been doing all day and all her little troubles. So he wouldn't be quite alone. It was ten o'clock ; I mentioned it, but in my heart of hearts I hated leaving him until she came, though I did not want to meet the girl. I rather deprecated her visits, yet after all it was no affair of mine. Then I suddenly said I was thirsty and he volunteered to get me some lemonade from the dining-room upstairs. "Yes, yes, I'm thirsty," I said, but really I was not. It was some hint from Fate that prompted my request.

Left alone in the room I sat still and wondered what there was for me to do? There was something—some mission, some duty to perform—for someone else's husband! Ridiculous! It wasn't my business. Suppose I just got up and went away? Left the house and ran home? I had forgotten my latchkey, but my maid was sitting up for me, and it was only ten. But another "suppose?" Suppose I came to 84 to-morrow to fetch some more manuscripts to read and Hermosa met me and said that something awful had happened! That talk of suicide—was it meant for me? Was it a cry for help from the intimate thought-reserve of another human being?

There was so little time ; it would not take him more than two minutes to fetch that lemonade, unless indeed he was making it—squeezing lemons. . . .

I had to do something, that was clear to me, but also, no clear plan of action was mine. But I stayed, and when he came down carrying the glass I got up and took it from him and put it on the table.

What can a woman do? There is the old, traditional way of comfort . . . something of the sort . . . I put one hand on the lapel of his coat, using, I think it was, the simple outsider's phrase :

"Don't look so unhappy!"

The other hand, by the will of Providence, stole to the loose, open pocket of the brown velvet jacket that Rossetti had once worn. It fished out a dark, fluted bottle, inscribed in the Futurist colours of danger, POISON. The blunt letters were like the head of a cobra suddenly reared. I took it to the light, and he waited like a condemned criminal.

"Were you?" I said; and he answered, "I was."

"Donkey!" I said, and, keeping the bottle in my hand, sought for my cloak and shouldered it. He said anxiously, "Do you mean to give it me back?"

"No!" I was firm, and, for the first time after one of our dinners, he walked home with me—and it was only half-past ten when all was said and done.

I kept the bottle. I took my niece, whom I shall in future call the Beauty for she was one, a round of visits, and, when we came home, a course of balls. I neglected the *English Review* for her sake. Balls in the city, when we came home in the dawn at five and Fleet Street was full of pigeons waddling about in the depression of the road, where little accidental heaps of provender lay scattered. Suffrage balls, where Professor Ker danced with her like a two-year-old, and while the editor of the *English Review* danced with Christabel Pankhurst, very obtrusively feminine, holding up her long train with a ribbon attached to her wrist in the Victorian method.

Visits to different places in England, where, to my niece's delight, the editor, of whom we both had assumed charge, always made an excuse to come too.

She and I were really enjoying a holiday from the *English Review* at Selsey when one morning, as I was walking down the High Street, looking towards London, there suddenly appeared a dusty figure, on which everything that should have been black was white, sprinting along towards the address the child had given him. He explained to us that he had won seven pounds in a Derby sweepstake, and had, with his brother-in-law and Bob Woolley, hired a car and set out for the South Coast. Suspiciously near Chichester the car had broken down, and he had escaped. . . .

Well, it was very nice, and all these children—editor, niece, and the Heron Allen babies—played together, and somehow that car did never get mended, or he was never advised that it did, and in the end he sacrificed his share of the return journey and came up by train with us two. Something I said inspired one of the best poems he ever wrote. I was looking out of the window on the fields that run on each side all down the Peninsula, and all at once I screamed from my corner :

“ I see blood upon the buttercups ! ”

The poor Beauty, thinking her aunt had gone mad, crossed over to my side of the carriage to look, but saw only Nature's set scene that had been provoking her own outcries for the last five minutes—an immense hard, cold, yellow plain of buttercups growing close together, stretching away from the carriage window on both sides to the blue aniline sea, also on both sides, since this was a peninsula. But I—morbid fool!—saw a third primary colour. Flakes and splashes and pools of red lying, as it were, on the yellow pile of a Maple carpet of flowers, as if an army had bled to death on it. . . .

The horror lasted all day, and for days after. To the editor it suggested a poem, but to me sheer ugly disaster of some kind, not to be averted. Always the oiliness, the thickness, the glutinousness of blood appals me when I see it flow, even from a finger. I would never do for a mediæval lady watching a tournament; I could not look on the red-hung lists. Why are they hung with red? Is it so as not to dishearten the combatants by the sight of the blood of fallen knights? In the evening of the next day he read me the poem he had dedicated to me, in the garden opposite, sitting under a smoky, black-boughed may-tree by the light of a London gas-lamp. It was all about a duel . . . two knights . . . two ladies . . . with an up-to-date tag . . . something about "the long, long fight" that we moderns have to wage, bloodless combats with pens for swords and the lists drawn—not in the open air. . . .

And I, possibly, was still under the influence of this vision the day after, when he made me an astounding, romantic, nonsensical proposition, over the luncheon-table among crumbled bread and smoking Irish stew, speaking in a dead level tone, as if he had simply been saying, "Have some more!"

"Will you marry me if ever I am a divorced man?"

It was an assay in Pre-Raphaelite crudity of expression, as if a Madox Brown heavy oil-painting or an early Elizabeth Siddal water-colour had been suddenly turned into speech and I had nothing better to do than laugh quite nervously and put the question by. He returned to it again, and I got cross. "It was too sudden," as Victorian ladies used to say, and I did not really think he was serious. And, besides, I was thinking at that time—all the time—of a freshly made grave at Clarens.

The pleasant contingency he lightly indicated did not arise. Fate held other modes of making me useful—and

miserable. Less facile, more irksome, were to be my ways, and full of the snares and snags that Character lays for us, leading along to unthought-of disaster, and ending in the lonelinesses and futilities of wasted endeavour.

And now, Poor White Rose of Weary Leaf ;

I cannot see what pleasures  
Or what pains were.

. . . . .

Glad, but not flushed with gladness,  
Since joys go by ;  
Sad, but not bent with sadness,  
Since sorrows die. . . .

They do. And one comes to sit by some Border Stream in the Northland such as Swinburne describes, with one's knees drawn up, throwing little tufts of grass into the "wan water" at one's feet and seeing them drift.

Old Loves and faded fears  
Float down the stream that hears  
The flowing of all men's tears  
Under the sky.

Downstairs, sitting in the *chaise-longue*, too big for me, that had been got in for someone else, I listened to the editor, sitting opposite to me in a chair that was far too small for him, as was the way in this topsy-turvy house of art, reading aloud to me his new book, laying down carefully with his fine discriminating hand one type-written sheet after another as he finished it.

Hypnotised by the voice, inspired by it perhaps, my personality seemed doubled, my intelligence twice as efficient. I was able to think, *sub rosa*, of my own affairs, past, present, and to come, neatly pursuing a separate train of thought while taking in quite intelligently what was being read to me. No discourtesy to the author was involved ; I had discovered that his reading

was purely subjective, independent of his listener. Also that he disdained criticism or comment of any kind ; criticism ran off him like water off a duck's back ; comment, even praiseful comment, merely interfered with the psychic flow between himself and the medium of the moment—me. I was attending as much, and no more than, he wished. I was just a sounding-board.

He himself was abundantly psychic. It helped him, like any art that one practises efficiently. While taking a deep interest in me, he took none in my life-history or that of anyone else. But, did he so much as give himself the trouble to think about it, he would find that he knew everything, past, present, and to come. I believe myself that everyone does know all the time, but that the faculty for digging into our reserves of knowledge varies considerably, and, in most people, seems nearly atrophied.

His was certainly not. I have known this heavy man repeat to me, word for word, parts of a conversation held between myself and a soldier friend of his in a cottage parlour in England while he himself was in France. Before the editor returned Major V. died in hospital in England. Telepathy will hardly do ; the matter was too unimportant. One explanation would be that, the author in the seer knew precisely what this so ordinary soldier-man was likely to say to this so ordinary, jealous woman. That would be merely the exercise of his trade. Any author should be able to reconstruct the scene.

But it is uncanny to be linked in some sort to a supernatural being—as it were, the changeling of a nursery tale. Fairies, it is well known, prefer to have their infants brought up by human beings who have got salvation. And the human mothers are naturally annoyed by the wisdom of all the ages that the soulless fairy-child

possesses. It happens now and again that the human baby gets stolen away and the fairy's substituted. One woman, warned by a neighbour, proceeded to cook her porridge amiss, so that the thousand-year-old infant in the cradle by the fireside gave itself away by correcting her: "I am as old as the hills, and I never saw porridge made like that!" The woman made the sign of the cross over the elf-child, it flew up the chimney, and her own baby smiled in its place.

A genius must have been the first changeling. So new and so old, so wise and so simple, so innocent and so knowing: a man grown, but remaining, since no one has ever made the sign of the cross over him, the eternal child. And it is but a doubtful privilege of Genius, the retention of this child-mind, giving it, as it were, the simili-best of both worlds, but nothing really of either, which may prove its curse and its ruin. For Genius, like the fabled scorpion when finally cornered, stings itself with its own tail and commits suicide, aghast perhaps at its own inevitable selfishness. Selfishness, ineluctable factor, indispensable, everlasting stoker of the fires of Genius! Selfishness so solid, so extensive, that it transcends the mean little vice we currently speak of as a foible. Selfishness, like the protective colour of animals, the use of which is absolutely necessary for maintenance of the life and efficiency of the quality we admire.

It is selfishness which, at the lowest, makes Germany so strong, so efficient, so tough a customer—Germany, which, at its best, gave us Goethe. The artist-selfishness of Shelley, whose Cloud builds and unbuilds at its wayward pleasure, and laughing at its own cenotaph. Real genius laughs Homerically. I am sure Shakespeare and Ben Jonson laughed well. One does not quarrel with the deep, implicit selfishness of Nature who, whatever the poet may say, *does* betray the heart that loves her. You



JOSEPH LEOPOLD



cannot live without betraying—even the animals you eat ; you certainly cannot create without driving some pitiful human being or other into a decline.

I put him off then quite easily—found some *mot juste* or other, and he subsided for the time.

Much later I subscribed to his plans. The plangent, languid, tenor voice overcame my north-country sensibleness, hypnotised me into folly, as it was meant it should do. He returned to the charge politely, pertinaciously. . . . I was moved more by what I saw and guessed of his circumstances than by his arguments—though, indeed, he did hold out tremendous prospects of mutual help and avail. The literary world, an oyster which two persons of Good Will could easily open and make so much of for themselves and others—by means of the great *English Review* !

Literature, which actually exists for itself, like a non-tied public house, always hangs out this flattering bush. The vague advertisement of philanthropy covers unconsciously the fine egoism of the artist who works for the pleasure and vanity of making and is properly paid only in appreciation, although the fleshpots, such as a red brick palace and a title, are not ungrateful to him. This is demonstrable by the fact that the artist, even if he is not paid either way, mostly goes on being an artist, a plain "Mr.", and lives in a garret. No real artist is lured permanently to slipshodness by the prospect of red brick palaces, etc. . The pursuit of literature is more like acting than people think, for the hands that are lifted, the applause that dies down as soon as a newer sensation comes along and wipes out his Moment, is all the artist-actor cares for, really. It represents his immediate effect on the subject of an experiment—for every book is an experiment—some made on *corpus* very *vile*, when the effort is made to get just a laugh or a popular success.

His miserable household got on my nerves. I deeply desired to put an end to this state of things. Even as we sat on this foggy, windy night in June, I heard the saturnine creek of the standard something or other recently installed by Mr. Chandler on the roof which didn't work, which had fetched loose, and might any moment fall through and crush us as we sat. The Editor was too lazy to complain and have it taken away. The window on the north over the dusty, papery garden would not shut tight. I didn't at all like the feeling of the outer door on to the street always open. . . . Supposing someone were to take it into their heads to walk up—walk in? An Azef or a Vera F.?

And the people about the house, all excepting nice Hermosa, coming in in the morning like a breath of warm air from a kitchen where an aproned, rosy-cheeked woman had been baking, smelling somehow like new-made bread. But the cook here was a day woman, the kitchen was a cubicle, with room for nothing but things that had got thrown away behind the stove. Mrs. Miller was a nice, clean old body, but terribly inefficient, and a gossip. God knows what tales she took about, judging from those she brought to us. Her egregious surmise about the niece, delivered to my maid who came down now and again to bring spoons and lay smart cloths for a party: "Which of them is it? The young or the old one?" And the funny little barber who came every day and made the room temporarily into a shaving saloon. He earned his living by perambulating the hill and shaving two other Campden Hill worthies, Mr. Alexander, of Aubrey House, and Mr. Rawlinson, both collectors of Whistlers, Rembrandts, and Alfred Hunts, and both friends of my father. It was naturally rather an expensive way of being "barbed." The debility of the domestic arrangements, the enormous coming and going for which no provision was made! Clean sheets for Mr. Marwood . . .

where? A bath towel . . . but the bath wouldn't work always. The periodical irruption of commanding, dogmatic children—Shes who must be Obeyed—with their foreign governess. And, implicit in the household, though I hardly ever saw her, another foreigner, the pale, pasty-faced Elizabeth Schultz, bored, pining, discontented, dying to get away, with nowhere else to go . . . wanting luxury, gaiety, new clothes . . . always leaving paper patterns and powder-puffs about the room. . . .

All this purely domestic disorder was irritating to my North Country, menseful soul. But there were higher grounds for taking a hand. It was represented to me that I might incidentally save a talent, to say the least; save a soul—as I had saved a life. Save something! Not myself, for my life was over, buried in a grave. There was no secret about that, although it was never mentioned.

Women abhor being derelict, the having to face a void, an empty room that will never need to be "turned out" again—the crass sensation of uselessness. If they have been unemployed long enough, they are carried off their feet at once by the possibility of renewed sentimental occupation, a *scène quelconque à faire*, even if it is but a "turn"—not even a "star" one. This is, of course, a desire that no man, except a Communist or a Nihilist, has ever shared with them. Men, even in the tiniest expeditions, are glad enough to leave the bridle on the horse's neck, to rest on their oars so as to be able to go farther in the day. But women ride headlong; catch crabs, and tire themselves at once. Like men, they are ready enough to fit out an Argo—at someone else's expense for choice—but, unlike men, contemplate with more equanimity the prospect of leaving their bones on a desert beach in some Company's service. In fact, give them a chance—only half a chance—and they will make the usual fool of themselves. Not the Newest Woman

of all, but I happen to be the New Woman that people wrote about in the nineties.

I was ready to commit the eternal error. I was full, not of Love, but of Loving-kindness, and obsessed by the permanent illusion of all women that they can Save. His friends, Conrad, Marwood, Byles, dear Dollie Radford—not so much mine—had dinned it into me.

But, in fact, Woman has always been powerless to save, and there is no such thing as Loving-kindness between her and Man. It is bound to be Love, or nothing, with a dash of hate. The sexes are ravening beasts when once you come to brass tacks. And as, in the ancestral poem I have already quoted, "Of Love once sown, who knoweth what the crop is?" if it is an ill one—a crop of dragon's teeth—it is left for Her to reap the dreary harvest. As for salvage, it is well known that the shipwrecked mariner turns against his rescuer; and sailors, wise and primitive men, will let a man drown lest he live to do them an injury.

I was given to understand what was not—was not then and never was to be—but I am sure that the more deeply interested party to the affair had brought himself to the point of believing. Wheedlers—people who can, by the lure of the literary tongue, "kid" the intelligence of others—do invariably possess inordinate powers of self-deception. It takes deep conviction to convince: neat and fine technique to be plausible. As for me, ancillary events pushed to credence, and I was willing to indulge the pleader.

There was not even then the slightest chance of things falling out as he—as I, too, came to wish. I am supposed to have the devil's own luck, having been born on a Sunday, but, in this case, the devil did not fight for his own. And as for the editor, he was born unlucky—and well he knew it, regarding himself as one hated of the high gods. He failed generally, to obtain popular



MY NIECE

*Lailie Charles*



suffrage. "A lack of sympathetic imagination," as one who had the best right to know said of him. He had not the time to use tact. I wonder, did any genius ever?

This was a turning-point as we reckoned it, but the wrong way round. A gross miscalculation. The result, perhaps, of that want of sympathetic imagination on one side and blind adherence on the other. The whole conduct of affairs, so far as one consciously manipulated them, was based on a false assumption. . . . And away we went!

But, "Lord, if I am deceived, it is by Thee," says St. Augustine, and there are also Love's Martyrs "for ever, ever dying," says Calantha in *The Broken Heart*, and dances, dances among the reeling candles of the hall as each messenger of woe comes in and tells her of new deaths and calamities. . . .

I was very busy at this time—looking after my mother, writing a novel, and chaperoning the Beauty through her first season. She was like Romney's portrait of Lady Hamilton—golden hair, dark eyebrows, blue eyes, pink cheeks, and red lips, tall and a little clumsy. Her adorers were many, and, as often happens, of a certain age. Young men do not care for budding innocence. Nor did she. We used to profit by the gaps which the London season allows for refreshment. This Whitsun, we went to Aldeburgh to stay with Mr. Edward Clodd, whose cousin, who entertained for him at these house-parties, was my dearest friend.

We travelled down with Thomas Hardy and Mrs. Belloc Lowndes and a small Persian kitten in a basket, and, though I knew it not till I got to Aldeburgh, the editor and his protégée were in the same train.

You see, the editor of the *English Review* was so busy he could not do without his secretary, even for a

week-end. There was quite a tiny scandal, but I thought I knew why he did it ; philanthropy, a reckless instinct for kindness that cost him nothing, a desire to give that poor pathetic victim of life a short good time—walks by the sea and so a wholesome appetite. She took them by herself mostly. I managed to get away and walk with her once as far as the golf links, that she pranced over, looking every inch a foreigner, holding up her dress over her ridiculous starched white petticoat . . . afraid of the balls . . . she had never seen links in her life. But she *was* perfectly happy at Aldeburgh, and it made him happier so that later, when he went to stay with the Bennetts in an hotel at Hastings, he took her too, and gave *tant soit peu* umbrage to a lady who later came to know him better.

A note was sent round to invite him with his secretary to come in to supper on Sunday and meet Professor Gilbert Murray. He came alone, of course. After dinner, in that library of the distinguished scientist who was also a sailor, like a ship's cabin with the telescope pointed permanently out of the window, we sat round and talked ghost-stories. The face of the friend and ally of Huxley, the holder of the Animist theory, was worth seeing as we raved and sentimentalised. Professor Murray, not yet absolutely convinced of the survival of consciousness after death, talked philosophically and critically about apparitions. Thomas Hardy told ghost stories just as a Wiltshire peasant might, sitting in the ingle-nook of an old inn in Shaftesbury with a hand on each knee. He told the story of the Collingwood caul that someone, knowing his *culte* for Nelson, presented to him. It is the skinny membrane found on the heads of some babies at birth and preserved by the nurse for luck. That of Nelson's friend, so preserved, Mr. Hardy put on a shelf over his bed, where he could touch it. In the night he heard it moving . . . shifting . . .

His zest for the macabre was not proof against traditional terrors inculcated at his mother's knee. He returned the caul to the family.

In his soft, low, yet clear, wistful tones, he related his one perennial dream.

"I am pursued, and I am rising like an angel up into heaven, out of the hands of my earthly pursuers." With a small, deprecating laugh, "I am agitated and hampered, as I suppose an angel would not be, by—a paucity of underlinen."

At Oxford my niece and I were guests of the austere and darling Professor Ker. He naturally could not put us up at All Souls, so he planted us at The Mitre, and gave us dinner in College every night to meet all the notabilities of Oxford. The Beauty, as usual, was the guest of honour. "Prof," as she called him, adored her, and I think her early death helped to break him up. I forgathered with a dear old friend of Bamborough days, the late Master of Balliol and his wife, whom I had known since I was a child, and her son, Lionel, who was tutor to the Prince and took him to Paris—a young god, but one with whom I could not persuade my niece to fall in love.

And all the while I was getting screeds from the disconsolate poet at home, containing jealous innuendos of the Oxford don and what he called "imbecile details" of his present preoccupation that "would look so funny if they were ever printed and read out in court." A premonition! And also the usual imbecile flattery of the beloved object. But every woman knows that every other woman could not help being affected ever so little at being called, all in one sentence, Helen of Troy and Semiramis, St. Catherine of Siena and Christina of Milan, "with a dash of Becky Sharp and the Blessed Damozel!" One wouldn't be human if one wasn't, and one was.

We returned. It was July. The season was in full swing, and the Beauty was sitting to Mr. Harrington Mann in the mornings and dancing all night. The heart of social London had turned to shady things and parties in gardens, preferably under the stars. There was one party in St. John's Wood—music inside and the hooting of owls out. Supper was spread under the trees, while in the lighted studio a Parisianised American was singing coon songs. The Beauty, like a young white heifer robed in sacrificial chiffon, danced, and we two chaperons sat in the semi-dark where studio and garden, easels and trees, met and were confounded. This means that the windows were taken out. The sheen of white tablecloths loomed under the trees, where earwigs and gnats and blossoms dropped into the creams and jellies that we poetical people hardly touched. . . . Dew falling. . . . The clashing of bits and bridles and the chastened gossip of coachmen in the lane of Melina outside fell on our ear, and, from the studio, the caressing, insinuating refrain, as if the singer, knowing the vanity of human wishes, had his rueful tongue in his cheek all the time :

You shall have all you wa-ant and a little bit mo-ore.

It was fate. We all say so.

Alas, the eye of the builder falls covetously on those useful waste places, and their day is not long ! The William De Morgans gave a farewell party for The Vale—condemned. Often I had passed its untidy gates in the King's Road, but had never been inside the cat-haunted, park-like grounds. I knew that Whistler had had a house in there, and another painter, and Mr. and Mrs. De Morgan a third house. There were three hosts to that half-acre of land, and, in the semi-darkness, we and a concourse of indistinguishable people that we knew if

we could have seen them wandered in and out of three abodes, and wondered idly which of the little Victorian cottages had been the Pink Palace where the lovely model, Maud Franklin, had reigned, and wheeled the baby in the perambulator dressed as a nurse. In one of these houses there had been a terrible row when the egoist artist discovered that Maud, neglected, scorned, yet retained, had been posing to Stott of Oldham for Venus. Now all is down, and I have sat with Margaret Sackville and Mr. Ramsay Macdonald at lunch in a smart house on the site of this garden of the past.

And about this time the editor spared a day to go down to Tonbridge and have a talk with Edmée Van Der Noot, and in the evening I took my maid with a basket down to Holland Park Avenue, opened the door, mounted the stair, and, carefully making the noise of four pairs of feet so as to impress Mrs. Chandler, prepared a little supper. We found some wine there, and we made sandwiches out of a tin of very special green tomatoes, and very nasty they were. But when the traveller returned, and we had drunk wine together in the good German fashion, we neither of us cared for sandwiches. The refrain of the Italian song from last night was still in our ears. He said :

“There is pleasure in knowing that one can talk to a person who understands one for the rest of one's life ; that alone is heaven. . . . And you, in addition. . . . Why, it is heaven and a little bit more.”

The poor old Review, that had cost one hundred and twenty pounds a month, and that people, in spite of my superhuman touting, had not been so very anxious to pay the enormous sum of two shillings and sixpence for, was in liquidation. The efforts of Friedrich and Antonia Hueffer and the might of the German mark would be wasted unless a plutocrat could be found to purchase and

run it. The editor's fancy heavily turned to thoughts of Samuel Sidney McClure. Miss Willa Cather was excessively kind about it, and volunteered to write to Samuel Sidney, with whom she had much influence, and put the idea into his head. I think the woebegone aspect of the editor, whose young but well-grown literary infant it was threatened to remove from his care, touched her to the heart. We used to go to tea with her in her hotel opposite the British Museum gates and talk and talk. Miss Willa Cather was gentle and quiet in manner; polite but withdrawn; the modest self-sufficiency of delicate and virile power.

She sat, almost god-like, on her pedestal on the Parnassian heights of *McClure's Magazine*, or I understood her to do so, and watched us squirm and rave in our death-agony—the *English Review's*, I mean.

For, nice as she was to us about it, we felt the Review was lost. Samuel Sidney was not taking any.

The editor, sensible of her kindness and interest in his moribund infant, had only one way of repaying her—his usual coin—an introduction to Conrad; but that did not come off. The great man was irritable and irritated by some outside agent. Miss Cather, I think, never saw the long white road in front of Capel House and the French bulldog head, deep between his shoulders, but smiling with all its fangs, of Joseph Conrad. He always came up to time in this way. I mean, he would refuse to see people, he habitually did refuse to see people, but if he was persuaded to see people he turned on the smile and did things properly.

The Beauty, having refused Count A., who owned half Sicily and the revenue accruing from the particular brand of champagne from which he took his name, went back to her Northern home, preferring curates and cassocks to counts and champagne. "So like *Wuthering Heights*!"

the editor observed later, when he escorted my mother there for her yearly month with Beauty's mother. But I fancy he was alluding to the atmosphere of Bedburn, for Beauty's home was excessively comfortable. His visit was not a success. How could he have got on with a simple sportsman and fisherman and local J.P., who had got himself on to the board on purpose to deal with poachers! They were "miles apart," my sister said, confessing she liked him best in his own *milieu*. She had had quite a good time in the office of the Review, when he had entertained her, and in the theatres where his own *Critical Attitude* took him.

I realised that I had thrown pearls before swine in the more recondite sense of the word, and I realised, too, that the pearl had been lazy. He was accused, in no measured language, by Beauty's mother of coming to her place in order to rest his brains, and "playing the fool in order to adapt himself to the intellect of his host." Beauty's mother was no fool. Presently he begged to be, and was, relieved by his sister-in-law, who stayed for the rest of the time and brought my mother home. Mary Martindale was Martha Martindale too. She doubled, so to speak, these two scriptural parts. I wish she was here with me now and had not gone to live in Germany.

Then he and I went on a series of visits. One was to Goring Hall, where the Monds were that year, in the very house, I believe, where Esther Waters was servant and had the affair with the groom. A car was put at our special service. And we went to see Sir Harry Johnstone at Poling Priory, and the Roman villa at Bignor, and the pictures at Petworth, and to consult the Wise Woman of Storrington—a proceeding to which I was averse, lest she said something discouraging. In the evenings it was poker and pyramids into the small hours, and the editor had the pleasure of losing a lot

of money. He could not play a bit. Manlike, he *would* play. He certainly lost well.

Another visit was to Sheringham, where we found Aubrey Beardsley's sister, Mabel Wright, sweet Catholic saint whom the editor and everyone worshipped, and to whom W. B. Yeats wrote his most beautiful poems—"Our Lady of Pain." She always looked as if she had a headache. She was now frail, thin, tall, and mediæval, and it was strange to remember her, buxom, girlish, playing mistress of the house to Louie Freear's charwoman, the stage resounding to "Sister Mary Jane's Top Note!" She never would talk about her brother—the most charitable soul in the world! The editor, in a summer-house in the garden that moved on a pivot, dictated to her some of his new book. Lovely ladies where he happened to be staying were always proud to take up their pens on his behalf, and so we wiled away the time with bridge in the evenings and old Norfolk churches in the day.

It was at Sheringham that one of those grotesque letters that lawyers are put to it to write when it becomes suddenly necessary for them to drop into the language of romance, was handed to him. We were out on the lawn playing croquet. He shoved it in his pocket and went on playing—just as he did six years later on the golf links at Selsey when a police officer handed him an order to leave his house on the coast because he was supposed to be a German, had a German name, and because his English secretary insisted on wearing a soft Homburg hat purchased in that region. Enemies in the neighbourhood—and he had many—had been at work. He took the letter then, gave it to his caddie to hold, and made the best stroke he ever did in his life. It became a usual experience. Enquiries were always being set on foot by the envious. And I used to stymie police officers by at once producing his English certificate.

of birth kept ready. Three or four times that summer, lying in my hammock among the apple-trees in that seaside orchard, I have seen a bashful personage of this description, sent down from London, advised of the traitor in our midst, peeping slyly round the corner of the cottage. I would say, languidly putting a leg out of the hammock: "I know what you've come for," and run in past the man, with his mouth open, and finding my workbox, produce the well-thumbed certificate of birth at Merton, in Surrey, with all the six baptismal names so strangely German in character, wisely changed afterwards. I would note the effect on the good British soul in uniform, and, though longing to offer him a drink, would refrain, since the poor dear would have to refuse it.

It was near my birthday, and I have always regarded it as the happiest birthday of my life, although we did have our first quarrel about the fly to the station. We were staying with an American dentist and his wife, my friend, at a place—Beaumont le Roger—in the very heart of Normandy. Their real home was in the Rue de la Paix, where Mr. Farley carried on his practice as a dentist. His wife was Irish, a Power, a descendant of that Earl Ferrers who murdered his butler and had the privilege of being hanged with a silken rope in view of his high station. Farley was quite mad, and his wife, Agnes, was just mad enough to be charming. A large, fine, plain woman, whom sculptors admired. She was young, but if she had lived to be old she would have been like Horace Walpole's Madame du Deffand. I introduced her to Arnold Bennett, who at once appreciated her to the full and wrote a preface to her little book on Beaumont. It is a charming, delicate *Cranford*—in Normandy, not Northants—and ought to be brought out again. He used to show her his poems—eighteenth century, rococo, French landscape pictures. But where

are they? He has published, I think, nearly everything but poems.

The house at Beaumont was one of those little wretched villas that people built last century, both in England and France, at the end of a large and straggling village—a place where Madame Bovary might have lived and been bored.

I was not bored in this *villegiatura*. The Risle ran almost under the house, so that the *bonne*, stooping, washed her salads and rinsed her dishes in its flow. The rooms were hardly furnished, as a counterblast to the magnificence of the flat in the Rue de la Paix and there were very few of them. He slept *au grenier* and I in a sort of shabby annexe to the bedroom of Monsieur and Madame. If I had wanted to get out I should have had to *enjamber* their bed, and, if I wasn't careful, displace one of the bricks that were placed on top of each other to make the fourth leg of my own "maid's bed," as they called it—jog it, and all would be lost!

The editor dictated to me and Agnes alternately a novel called *The Portrait*, sitting on the purple heights of Grosly. In the afternoons we walked in the woods, where boars lurked and were sometimes hunted, or helped William Farley, who was "resting," and, with a pole instead of forceps, attempting to clear the river of weeds and find the pike that ate fish and that nobody had ever seen. Or we would take a rickety *calèche* and visit Lisieux Cathedral, or some old, mediæval château ruined by the Revolution, where, on the ground floor, old black-robed peasant women potted about among dressers covered with bowls of pale primrose-coloured cream, that relieved the grey of the strong stone walls, still fit for a siege, of Harcourt. Or we would walk among high hedges, across marshes, by straggling, forgotten paths, to this or that old ruined *manoir* that would not let. *A cause des revenants!* And to peer

between gaps in the blocks of loosened stone and see inside, rising out of straw and rags where pigs and tinkers and gipsies had been sleeping, the traces of casual fires lit on the floor, not in the fireplace, under the old François Premier mantel. And home to good cottage cooking—*omelettes*, *poulets* with white wine, and lashings of Calvados, the wonderful apple cordial of the place. The *omelettes* were not always good. Once, when Agnes was out, the maid came to me and said madame had commanded an *omelette* and how was she to make it? I said, confounded at her asking me such a thing :

“ Oh, the usual way, I suppose.”

That night the sweet came up all prettily flaring—an *omelette aux rhum*. I tasted it. I thought it was queer, and looked round at the others. Obviously they also thought it was queer, and then—I bit upon an onion !

At Evreux, where we decided to go for my birthday treat, a short railway journey away from Beaumont, the Cathedral was all draped and starred—gold on that peculiar French blue that expresses them, and red, of course. All was being got ready for the canonisation of Joan of Arc. We two English of the country that burned her cut but a sorry figure. Still, all was clean, clear, and lovely that day, and our lunch delicious—no absurd, combined sweet and savoury *omelette*—and the cloakroom and bathroom of the hotel exquisite, white tiled, with silver taps, lace pin-cushions, fancy soaps, and the rest of it—a perfect bower of bliss ; so I came back and told him, because in little French country towns—and English, too—this was wonderful and unusual.

But we had to go home for the sake of the *English Review*, of which, though it was now run by a company, he was still editor. Hermosa was caretaker, and expected him on Friday some time.

I had got rather ill, and could not risk a night passage

and return the way we had come—via Southampton and Havre—so it was decided that we should start on Thursday morning instead of Friday night, arrive in Paris at twelve, and get off by the two o'clock boat, arriving at ten-thirty on Thursday night. This would avoid the night journey. We each sent a telegram, I to my maid to meet me, and the editor to Hermosa, advising her of the change of plan, begging her to be at her desk on Friday at ten sharp in order to begin work. By this he would gain a day and all was well.

It was far worse for me than travelling at night as it happened, for we had a wet crossing and a long one, and we had chosen to stop on deck. One experienced the usual relief of getting into the rather uncomfortable train that, after the tossing boat, appears so nice, calm, stable and English. Half asleep in my corner I watched for the lights of Smeeth as we rattled by in the dark but I could tell by instinct where the queer, diabolically shaped tower of Aldington Church must be. He of course knew it well but how often have I seen that eldritch tower since in my dreams? Aldington, with its church and its haunted Knoll, is an uncanny place that he has written about often.

The ghost must have laughed! The devilry of Aldington was perhaps responsible for what followed—our neglect of ordinary precautions. We were so good we were careless and I, so neatly chaperoned while I was in France, *tant soit peu* relaxed when I set foot on the shores of England. One of us surely ought to have got out at Hither Green and the other have entered Charing Cross alone. But I was cold, tired and weak . . . a drowned rat dying to get home. I walked after the porter and my luggage. Why did the steps of my companion weaken? I noticed it . . . raised my eyes, too weary to take much in. . . .

But I got an eye-opener for an, after all, conventionally

well-regulated person and a chaperon of youth to boot ! There on the sort of rostrum where it seems passengers stand to await the porters with their baggage through the Customs . . . ! A vestal virgin suddenly confronted with the irate goddess whose shrine she would seem to have profaned, wasn't in it . . . !

And yet I was, if a drowned, a perfectly respectable rat ! Appearances, which after all, on the face of it and in the end, are all we humans have to go by, were against me. For no one on the prosecuting side ever stops to think that for real, intending criminals the easiest thing in the world is to keep the said appearances up. It is no use *being* good.

I used to know " Violet Fane," and hear how she had written a novel in which she described poor Sir Philip's " oyster eye," certainly not in hate, but rather too much *con amore*. People suggested that it was perhaps because she was newly a widow and he had not bounded to marry her. So she wrote, not a memoir, but a *roman à clef*—so much more respectable. For she was a woman of the world, and women of the world in those days did not publish straightforward reminiscences affording to every Tom, Dick, and Harry chapter and verse concerning what was none of their business ; pages peppered with indiscretions that are not nowadays even indiscreet. But, as it was, all the London of her time was shocked at her modest appeal to an English gentleman's better feeling, and it was quite on the cards that she might be " cut." Agonies, consultations ! What did brave Sophy Lamb do ? She took the social bull by the horns and a walk in the Park at the fashionable hour, bidding the courteous Sir Philip do likewise, spoke kindly to him, and Appearances, Lover, and All were saved.

But I was not Sophy Lamb, though I had a maid to meet me all right. He delivered me up to her hands,

saying simply: "It's all up, old girl! You will see. There'll be no divorce."

Our preoccupation ran on rather separate lines at this moment, though they converged in a common desire for quite ordinary happiness. We thought we had a right to expect it. But that dream, for him, was over. He was an indurate cynic and no believer in the inherent nobleness of human nature—feminine human nature especially. His women—at least they seem so in his novels—are Very Women, of a mere mediæval morality, behaving always at the dictates of the old-fashioned feminine mental apparatus which we suffragettes hope we have left behind. From that moment he was perfectly aware that his name, in any sense agreeable to him, would never figure in the Cause List, and that Elizabeth Schultz might as well pack up and go home to Germany.

But I was not so safe on this point. I did not know his Pappenheimer, and for many months to come I went in the dread of the greatest misfortune that could, at that still stringently Victorian epoch, befall an unmarried woman with a mother to take care of, and a girl to chaperon; and a large circle of friends and relations to placate and keep in a good humour. Does post-war woman realise the differentiation of the standard of manners that has obtained since 1918? In pre-war days Hamlet's brutal suggestion to the débutante Ophelia was perfectly practical politics—"Be thou chaste as ice and cold as snow, thou shalt not 'scape calumny," or accept male escort in any circumstances whatever. One could not go out in the dark, one could not go out in the rain even, because one's dress was so long that it took any amount of holding up lest it got "messed" about the hem. One had to take, in fact, all the care in the world to prevent one's flopping, feminine, vulnerable character from getting smirched or, at least, needing a new "bind." Marriage?

Nowadays, when skirts are so short that even children cannot reach up to their mother's apron-string—if she wears one ; and actually the fashion of to-day shows a little apron about as big and useful as that of Rosina, the maid, in *Il Barbiere*—there is no great danger of their getting muddled, and one can be as careless as one likes, short of total immersion in a mud bath at Piccadilly Circus on a wet night.

I remember when I was a girl watching, fascinated, at the Royal Academy private view, a woman I knew—a shrinking, beautiful, famous creature—on the arm of her brother-in-law, looking as if she wished the floor would open and swallow her. She was being very brave, for this was an appearance-saving device of sorts instigated by her family with the collaboration of the supposed injured wife, who came up and spoke to her quite nicely in the course of the evening. They were famous persons, all three—and deservedly so. They were exploiting their fame—and they succeeded, just as did the lady who became an Ambassadors, and was able to trail her unpleasant leash of little dogs over the parquets of the Embassy, to the disgust of the Roman ladies. Her experiment was touch and go. All the Row was on its hind legs, so another beauty of the period who was an eye-witness tells me, to see if she would pull it off. And my fair, frail friend and her brother-in-law were followed through the rooms of Burlington House as though she were Royalty.

The prestige of both these ladies, in their degree, saved them—as, I suppose, mine did me. I had a great deal “on” it—the care of my mother, the cherished long visits of the Beauty. . . . At that moment, standing bewildered, worried, and frightened, I would have taken cover—married anyone !

Certain gatherings to which, during my various terms of chaperonage, I had allowed my niece to go, in essence  
Fy

as respectable, as innocent, as they make them, would be in these days considered as prim and as boring as a meeting of Friends. The drawing-room at Holland Park Avenue, even in those days styled a little Bohemian, seemed quieter than the village schoolrooms where she and her friends would meet once a week to discuss Scott's *Rokeby* or *The Odyssey*. Talk of my taking her to 84 nowadays, and kindred places! She would take me to amuse me with what had long since ceased to amuse or even startle her. Chaperonage, my pride and my care in those days, is now obsolete. A chaperon is a dodo—a lovely and darling dodo if you will. Bohemia has lost its terrors and also its interest. The *Yellow Book* was said by a witty journalist to have turned grey in a single night of 1895; six years of after-war would have made its poll as white as driven snow. It is young girls who give the Bohemian parties now on top floors in Bloomsbury, and the young men bring the drinks. And other aunt's Beauties, self-willed and opinionated fling their pretty caps over the windmill and recover them, or make themselves a new one every morning. And there is no cap to throw, for their own grandmothers do not wear one.

And even in those days the most straitlaced were not always as straitlaced as they seemed. I went down to Eltham soon after this for lunch with one of the very wittiest women in England. Lovely walks home across the Park from women writers' dinners and committees we used to have! Her wit, easy, not too dry, human, suited me exactly; she had an old-fashioned turn of mind, like me, that delighted and soothed me. She was just like "Isabel Carnaby," who should not so easily have been let die.

This day she was sitting with her father, her mother, and her publisher. Her husband was at the school where he was master, but he was taking me to the

ruins of the old palace after lunch ; but my hostess, leading me up to her room to take off my hat, showed me with some zest a modern relic far more exciting—to her at least, but I like real antiquities. . . .

“Do you see that?” she asked, pointing out of the window across the park to a little low cottage opposite nestling in some trees. That was all I saw.

“Look close at the side of the house, under the window.”

I looked, and saw a very ordinary drain-pipe running up from the ground to that window.

“That,” said the lady, “that is the very drain-pipe that Mr. Parnell climbed up to get to Mrs. O’Shea !”

The mild antiquarian charm of the Palace of Eltham must pale in the light of that.

*Lovers in London—Condition of the Review—The Harmless Necessary Elizabeth at 84—An Invitation to Rye—The "Veracious Pinker"—The Arm of the Goddess—The Editor to Henry James—I too—Honesty not the best Policy—"Lamentable, oh, lamentable!"—Invitation cancelled—Placards in High Street—Means to an End—Early Victorian Revulsion—"Alas, how easily things go wrong!"—Try another Way—Amenities of Brixton Gaol—A Lost Legacy—Wyllye and Marten—Hunt for Hudson—Messages from Conrad and James—"Dear Violet" again—Teas and Tennis—American Poets and Beauties—Hudson and Ann Veronica—The Cabaret Club and Madame Strindberg—Arnold Bennett and my Mother—Gaiety and Gloom—Waiting for a Move—No "Consequences in the Stars."*

THAT was a black autumn. Influenza was very bad. The whole of the new Mrs. Arnold Bennett's stay in England was ruined by it, so her husband wrote, and we never saw either of them. We walked every day together in Kensington Gardens and sometimes as far as the Row where, among the determined winter riders, Cunninghame Graham on his Arab waved to us, walking along by the railings. Or in the sunken garden by the Orangery to avoid the wind, or :

. . . . . On the sodden grass  
The black sheep straggling here and there.  
And the sullen pond, like a looking-glass—  
I'd rather be here than anywhere !

This quotation, from a poem called "Lovers in London," the composite work of Andrew Lang and myself, suited our mood.

There was very little to be pleased about. The *English Review*, like a fine lusty baby well started in life, that only wanted money for its special foods and up-to-date feeding bottles, was slipping, had slipped, out of the

editor's yearning arms. He edited it, but it was no longer his own, his own invention, on which he had thought nothing of dropping a hundred and twenty pounds a month. We hardly spoke of it, but of the ducks, of Oliver Cromwell's defences and the expense of laying out the borders with spring flowers, an expense to which I objected, and was at once called hard and "North Country." Any stick will do for a sick man to beat a sympathising dog with.

Then he went back to his desk, and I did not see him all day—for I was now not allowed to go to the office any more—until the evening, when he would come and dine with my mother and myself, and then play picquet with her, sing to me, and at eleven sharp I would let him out and close the door behind him, and he would return to his cheerless home, where Elizabeth Schultz was now domiciled. Mrs. Miller was gone. They had to have a cook now, a German called Gertrud, and she had a son. I heard of him now and then. Elizabeth kept house rather expensively, I gathered. She was preoccupied by herself, her nails, and a cageful of Budgerigars, and the cage kept falling down and killing a bird now and then, when she wept. Germans are fonder of birds than of other pets. The poet cherished her greatly and insisted on her being put forward as much as possible. She was shy and modest, and deprecating of her appearance. Yet people admired her.

May, who saw her once at a party at 84, where she had been persuaded to appear and pour out tea, dressed in one of my frocks—grey mock fur made tight and plain in the new mode that was coming in—asked me who the beautiful, pale, Russian princess was?

Silent, unseen except on this one occasion, she was like a sickly, discontented spirit about the house. I had never felt at ease in it since she came there, yet she liked me, and shyly confided in me. She wanted her

Papa—she pronounced the a's short—to set her up in a dressmaking business.

I thought the importation of this young lady a mistake. She was supposed to be housekeeper, but she was quite a muff at that, and permitted her compatriot to do as she would. Mr. Chandler and "the Fairy" often confided to me their painful surmises. There was far too much going up and down stairs of the out-of-work son carrying black shiny bags, which, Chandler averred, contained whole legs of mutton ordered of him in the master's name. And an immense amount of white wine from the grocer's next door for kitchen use that never got into the stews! But the editor was not one to count the cost—any cost—in any case.

And Henry James was ill, too. I wrote to him, and received in return a letter combining the suavity of the host with the touchiness of the invalid :

" Lamb House,

" Rye,

" Sussex.

" *October 31st, 1909.*

" MY DEAR VIOLET,—Yes, indeed, I am at Rye—where else should I be? For I am here pretty well always and ever, and less and less anywhere else. There are advantages preponderant in that; but there are also drawbacks; one of which is that I am liable to go so long without seeing you. But to this, on the other hand, there are possible remedies—as, for instance, that of your conceivably (I hope) coming down here for a couple of nights before very long. Is this thinkable to you? Not unaware as you are of my homely and solitary state, my limited resources, my austere conditions, and frugal though earnest hospitality. I am more and more aged, infirm, and unattractive, but I make such a stand as I can, and

shall be very glad to see you if you can brave the adventure or face such a tiresome displacement on such meagre terms. We can have a long jaw (with lots of arrears to make up), and, weather permitting, eke a short walk. The *week-end* would suit me (though I am not restricted to that) of almost any of the next weeks, and you could perhaps then take the Saturday a.m. train and get here for luncheon—in which case we could take even two walks. Let me know what I may hope, and that health and peace attend you, and believe me to be,

“Yours ever,

“HENRY JAMES.”

I accepted with the usual heartily expressed elation—that was merely respect—but I think I really rather loved Henry James; I had known him so long, and as a plastic schoolgirl. But it was not to be. My pitch was queered damnably. . . . There had been signs . . . rumblings. . . . One evening I got a short note from H. G. much distracted by something “the veracious Pinker” had told him. He did hope I wasn’t going to get into another mess—any mess—a particular mess he had heard of? Dear H. G.!

Pinker always knew everything, and was always looking out to do something kind and apposite with his knowledge. And a week after I had accepted I received letters from Henry James which decidedly knocked the first nail into my coffin. For observe the change of title—a change subtle and cruel!

“DEAR VIOLET HUNT,—I should be writing to you to-night to say that it would give me great pleasure to see you on Saturday next had I not received by the same post which brought me your letter one from —, which your mention of the fact that you have

known the writing of it enables me thus to allude to as depriving, by its contents, our projected occasion of indispensable elements of frankness and pleasantness. I deeply lament and deplore the lamentable position in which I gather you have put yourself. . . . It affects me as painfully unedifying, and that compels me to regard all agreeable or unembarrassed communications between us as impossible. I can neither suffer you to come down to hear me utter those homely truths, nor pretend at such a time to free or natural discourse of other things on a basis of avoidance of what must now be most to the front in your own consciousness, or what in a very unwelcome fashion disconcerts mine. Otherwise, "*es wäre so schön gewesen!*" But I think you will understand, on a moment's further reflection, that I can't write to you otherwise than I do, or that I am very sorry indeed to have to do it.

" Believe me, then, in very imperfect sympathy,

" Yours,

" HENRY JAMES."

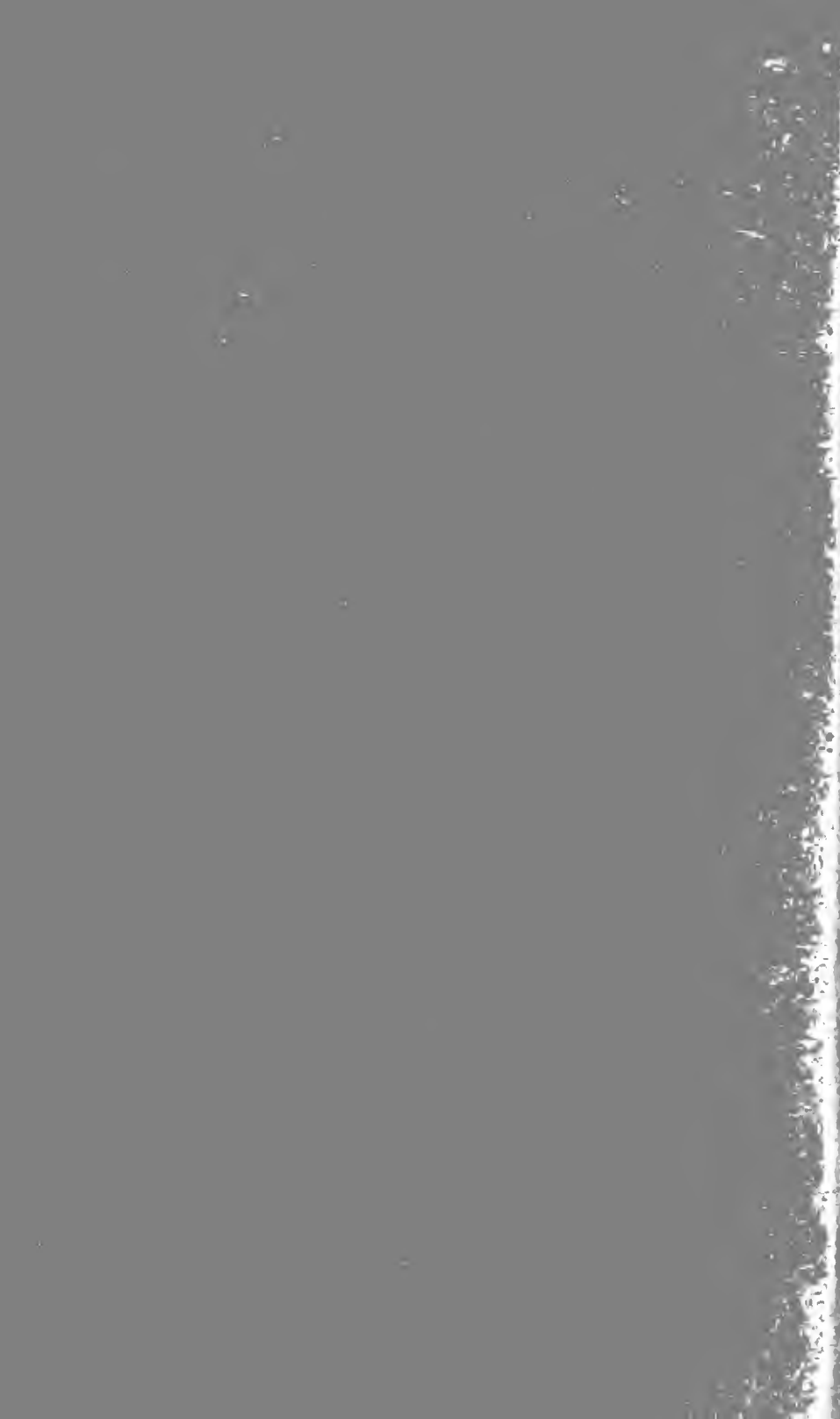
I wrote, and he replied :

" . . . I am obliged to you for your letter of Wednesday last, but, with all due consideration for it, I do not see, I am bound to tell you, that it at all invalidates my previous basis of expression to you. It appeared from that . . . that the person best qualified to measure the danger feared for your reputation, and I really don't see how an old friend of yours *could* feel or pronounce your being in a position to permit of this anything but lamentable, lamentable, oh, lamentable ! What sort of a friend is it that would say less ? I wasn't for a moment pretending to characterize the nature of the relations . . . that may conduce to that possibility . . . but your position ! If I had to



To Violet Hunt  
her faithful old friend  
Lamb House  
November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1907  
Henry James

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speaking of it again I am afraid I could only speak of it as lamentable. . . . I, however, deprecate the discussion of private affairs of which I wish to hear nothing whatever. And, neither knowing or willing to know anything of the matter, it was exactly because I didn't wish to that I found conversing with you at all to be in prospect impossible. That was the light in which I didn't—your term is harsh!—*forbid* you my house; but deprecated the idea of what would otherwise have been so interesting and welcome a *tête-à-tête* with you. I am very sorry to have had to lose it, and I am yours in regret,

“ HENRY JAMES.

“ *November 5th, 1909.*”

It was represented to him that he had more or less put himself in the position of a judge, and vehemently he disclaimed it. He didn't “ for a moment pretend to judge, qualify, or deal with any act of conduct of V. H.'s in the connection, as a part, matter of . . . that whole quantity being none of my business and destined to remain so. . . . I deplored or lamented the situation in which you had landed or were going to land her. . . . I don't see how an old friend of hers can be indifferent to that misfortune. . . .”

“ But these things surely are your own affair. . . . I wish you very heartily that your complications may work out for you with some eventual ‘ Peace with honour.’ ”

Then I wrote to my dear Henry James passionately, speaking for myself, declaring that, for my part, I wasn't in a “ lamentable position ” at all. That I had nothing to do but speak the truth and defend myself if what he feared should come to pass. I said that I thought it very hard that he should turn against me, and that, though I was sorry I might not come to Lamb House, I quite understood that it might be inconvenient and

unpleasant to him to have me under his roof. I wanted him to believe that I should listen humbly enough to home truths from him if only a certain amount of the sympathy on which I had learned to count was behind it.

I assured him in plain language, using the stock, stereotyped expression consecrated by long use, that I was "innocent," and could not be dragged into anything, and that, as for the other details, could he not, if he was ever in the least interested in me, come and see me in town and let me tell him how I stood. I impressed upon him that he ought to count it to me that I had put him in possession of certain facts, and could very easily have paid my visit to Lamb House even at the risk of involving him in a scandal and selfishly grabbed my pleasure at the expense of his ease.

For one knew that the one thing Henry really dreaded was being mixed up with life in any way, or entangled in anything that went on outside the drawing-room door. He was in no sense a man of the world. And, being what he was, would it not have savoured of social meanness if, through mere contact, I were to procure the soilure of the white hem of Henry's robe of innocence? And there it should rest. If he, on his side, had not compassed the man's virtue of being *sans peur*, I had acted according to my own conscience and should retain the woman's of being *sans reproche*, so far as he was concerned. So that was that!

Christmas week was out. I had persuaded my friend Alfred Mond, to buy the Review, and, because his political views were so essentially different from those of the editor, there was nothing left for him to do but politely to relieve him of his task of editorship. The hurry of his spirits at depriving a man of his ewe-lamb was such that the kind Alfred ante-dated his letter by a year. The editor, on the rack, graciously undertook, however, to

produce the February number for the new editor and drill him in some of the practices which had made the Review worth buying.

And we walked as usual in the Park, treading the dead leaves like faded hopes under our feet, in silence. For a week of mornings he did not address more than three words to me.

Legal documents of all sorts, from all sorts of men about all sorts of things, began to flutter on to our door-mats and into our letter-boxes. "I canna tell a'! I canna tell a'!" Everything damned at once, for me and for him! The Law, of which till then I had not the slightest cognisance, for I came of decent people, loomed enormous—Law, insinuating itself like malarial dust into every simple-seeming detail of life—into the hall, the parlour, even into my poor mother's sick-room. Law can be forced upon the unheeding, as I came to learn, just as you can be the prey of germs in the street all unbeknown, and family law is the most insidious, the most penetrating of germs, bitterest in the mouth of all. I got sour and corrupted. Legal terms, as obscure to me as logarithms, and as perplexing, ran off my tongue. I became as inventive, as pettifogging as a little country attorney—I who, when I was about twenty-eight, having received my first cheque for my "Autolycus" article in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, had marched into the first bank I came to, somewhere near Trafalgar Square, and asked them to cash it.

"Your own bank?" the polite cashier insinuated.

"I have no bank,"—and a long sigh. I kept that cheque a week. It was not till I was paid for my second novel that I opened an account with eighty pounds at Barclay's Bank. Lord Kinnear, the dear old white-haired gentleman who walked up and down past the clerks behind their railings, treated me like a child, gave me advice, and warned me against overdrawing.

Money—money—all money—repugnant to the romantic mind! Money *per se* meant nothing to me. The spending of it came, as it does to us all, naturally, without effort, and nothing became me in my life so well as the losing of it, which I always did with the grace of ignorance. And I always imagined that lawyers and nice barristers, whom I danced with and met constantly at dinners, were male Portias, doing things for nothing and defending the helpless for the honour and glory of it. But now I was beginning to see that money had always meant everything—now as then. The editor had always told me, as a result of his study of mediæval documents, that, in the days when knights were bold and ladies the prize of the victor, the urge of money was even worse. The wealth of Helen of Troy, as well as her beauty, figures in the Iliad whenever she is mentioned. The men who fought for the praise of ladies and their bright eyes were the men who carried off rich women, imprisoned their mothers-in-law, and married other men's widows for the *beaux yeux* of their *cassette*, and the coarse phrasing used by the law in the dealings of married folk merely masks a monetary claim. . . .

Christmas—and Elizabeth presented me with a large slab of marzipan she had purchased for me, which I refused to eat, being tired to death of the sight of her domiciled at 84, as if for ever.

On Tuesday the 11th of January, as I was innocently going about my mother's business in my familiar shopping centre of Kensington High Street, my eyes fell on the legend set forth on a sandwich-board borne about by one of the dowdy men walking in the gutter. It dissociated itself at once from the other peripatetic advertisements with which I was so familiar as never to cast an eye on. It would be the Turkish Baths—at the corner where the 'buses stop?

**MR. HUEFFER TO GO BACK IN FOURTEEN DAYS**

I suppose most people are cognisant of the formula used in Restitution Orders. I was not. I hadn't been thinking of it very much, just then; and, anyhow, I had not expected it to come like that. I had been living on a volcano, and had got used to it in so many ways, resigning myself to a precarious existence on a slope, amongst scorix and brimstone from the crater whence new trouble constantly belched—fires of hate and passion from below, stoked by material greed. Money "working" still, a loathsome yeast at the very bottom of the earth!

May, when I talked like this, always said that, for her part, she'd rather take a bungalow on the edge of my particular volcano than row in the same boat with more knowing and cunning persons: sick she was "of the world we lived in, of cowardice and hypocrisy, and abominable, poisonous, sham morality."

Well, here it was, a fine overflow of lava for me. I had never in my life been associated, so far as I knew, with anyone who had ever "been in the papers." Sheltered Victorian women were not exposed by their men, much, to these things. . . . The immediate incidence of that placard appalled me. The name of the man who would ring the bell at my mother's house that very evening and ask for me was being promenaded up and down the street in capitals on a sandwich-board! It was a mercy that my niece had a cold and wasn't out with me this morning, for, possibly, the malign thing would have drawn its head in by the afternoon. Some other scandal would have turned up, for they seem to succeed each other on these posters like lightnings on a screen. Somebody might murder somebody between lunch and tea and engage the public's attention effectively. . . .

My suffrage experiences should have rendered me immune to the horrors of any sort of publicity, though indeed, I do not find political publicity as irksome as the other. And I had the same sensation of being drowned, submerged under a tidal wave, that had come over me in the passage of the Underground a year ago, at the moment when, dropping the screen of my cloak, I had whipped out my collecting-box and begun to beg. That was an awful moment, but it was soon over. I had had something to do, something to pull off. I had rattled my box at the right people, and looked pathetic at those whom the rattling would set against me, and I had got as much money and a little more than any other solicitants. That disgusting moment had had its pleasant reward at least. After all, one cannot gain anything without paying for it in some sort of sick distaste and apprehension of possible failure. We all fight, we humans, suffragettes and all, to provoke a change—something better, or, if for nothing else, for peace—"the central peace which subsists," so Wordsworth says, "at the heart of endless agitation." I always wrote that quotation in the Suffrage Bazaar copies of books one had to send.

And I suppose it did mean Peace. Something like it—of the nature of the "gauntlet with the gift in it," Mrs. Browning's phrase for the dispensations of a capricious fate. This was the blow of the gauntlet; what would the gift be? I set my lips and walked home, wondering how I would face my mother's servants? The maid who would let in the man whose name was "up," as she put it, all along Kensington High Street, the cook who would cook our dinner that very night! . . .

But I needn't have worried myself. He did not come up to see me that evening at all or for many evenings after that—too shy. I didn't wonder. Just imagine Conrad or Henry James in the same case? . . . But,

I know them, they would never have permitted themselves to come within a hundred miles of such a quandary, not for fame or love or money!

And indeed that night if he had come, I was in the mood to say to him:

"Why not go back and have done with it?" For Peace—a dreary sort of peace would certainly come to him that way. The peace of Renunciation that he was so good at. The "stupid, but exceedingly patient donkey"—his father's phrase that rankled, always. . . .

Time passed . . . months . . . well into May-time! No stones—weighty—not even a pebble—dropped into the silent pool of our fates. A conspiracy of silence! I went to many parties and the Beauty liked them. She missed the editor, willing, it would seem, to see us less often . . . rage, shamefacedness, what do I know? He plugged away at his Review, put more money into it, nearly ruined himself over it, made it into a company . . . He also, seemed to have joined the conspiracy of silence, so that I never, to this day, knew how he was taking it. He could easily have said "I told you so." He had been right last year at Charing Cross Station. . . . Anyway, true to his philosophy of *laissez-faire*, *laissez-aller*, do what you want and (let the other people) take what you get for it, he went on doggedly editing very well—my stuff too, for I had a serial running in the Review.

I suppose that in his so very recondite heart of hearts he knew he had muffed it. Self-deception as usual—the want of that form of imagination which is called sympathetic—the Shelleyan type of mind that scorns to drill itself into calculating its effects on other people and to take their mentality into account and realise that in the end, the mighty subliminal consciousness that secretly sways us, has its will. People say one thing, mean another, and do a third.

I rang up my solicitor but the dear man was vague about everything. It is a way nice solicitors who love you have when things are going to be awkward in all sorts of legal ways. The "best laid schemes of mice and men! . . . " Probably to a male questioner he would have been more explicit. We women had not got the Vote as yet and men still snubbed us, kept us uninformed, while spending our money.

I am apt to fight a losing game for all I am worth and lose it gaily, quoting to myself the funny parody of Christina Rossetti written by a Cambridge undergrad :

Those who ask shan't have,  
Those who don't, don't want,  
I'll have it !  
You shan't !

I always do ask. Sometimes I get it, but when I don't, pessimistically I sing a song of George Macdonald's :

Alas, how easily things go wrong !  
A sigh too much or a kiss too long,  
And there comes a mist and a weeping rain,  
And life is never the same again !

No, it never would be ; and with the mist and the weeping rain came a shower of Summonses, Petitions and Affidavits. I wonder how many times this year on my way to reception or tea party I "smacked calfskin"—held up my hand with a funny little book in it that might have been a Nelson classic for all I knew—and swore, mumbling, after the Commissioner for Oaths, that what had been said and written for me was the truth and nothing but the truth . . . ?

I seemed to have drawn a blank . . . in happiness. No Rewards and Fairies for me, no hope of the romantic millennium of which I had dreamed, of sentimental and satisfactory adjustments of joy or at least, amenity all round, that many indications had led me to hope. I suppose I don't know human nature, no novelist does.

We are all altruistic, of necessity, or we couldn't begin to write novels that might hope to please.

For me it seems the wheel of fate had not been even jogged. Complete stagnation! I felt like an aeronaut in a pocket—"stymied" in the air, I who like movement, even painful movement when every step hurts. To draw each breath in pain is better than being dead. If I could avoid the pangs of acute rheumatism by entire quiescence I should not lie still. . . .

And distinct damage had perhaps been done, losses incurred in my mad bid for my little millennium. In reaching out for one sort of happiness I had, may be, dropped that which I held. All that month I moved about dreading, yet daring, the moral shoot of anguish that I might very likely suffer through disobedience to advice in the past. Next to one other person I loved the Beauty better than anyone else in the world and she might be taken from me now. Yes, "The Crowned Caprice that rules the world" might play with me soon!

The immediate outcome of it all for the present seemed to be for the editor ten days in Brixton Gaol. There was something to pay, and he would have paid it, only that a sort of fanciful coup suggested itself to him. He conceived a plan such as would naturally occur to a romanticist, and commended itself to a reader of Grimm like me, entailing the use of the word prison instead of gaol, and durance vile for a fair lady—Rudel and the Lady of Tripoli, or Leonora. He would do it. It might bring about a change of heart, and so compass his desire. He refused to plead poverty and let the law take its course. I secretly believe he longed for the experience, and felt that, buoyed up by hope and greed of copy, he would be none the worse for prison fare and plank bed.

He had now become my mother's "P. G.," and lived in our house, paying her £3 a week, ample in those days,  
Gy

where I could look after him as well as the niece. Number 84 was partially dismantled, and one room given up to Mr. Byles, who was playing at being a literary agent there. During the editor's absence Mary Martindale and I, on his behalf, sold most of the library, spending long days hunting up and returning first volumes of valuable works to their owners. I still possess the first volume of a book of William Rossetti's, which got forgotten.

And one morning I packed a bag for the editor to take along with him to Marylebone Police Court. His further destination was a foregone conclusion.

Setting him down in a neighbouring slum, so as to preserve appearances—I never forgot I was a chaperon—I bade him farewell for as long a term as His Majesty's officers of the law should decree. "I don't plead poverty!" His contumacy, of the nature of a *parti pris*, was naturally not understood of the people!

My mother, the Beauty, and the servants at home were under the impression that he was going down to stay with a friend in the country, and I did not see him again until he had been in prison for four days, and had written me one letter to my three. Innocent! I had sent him the daily paper every day.

His friends took it all as a joke. Ezra Pound, from Lago di Garda, called him the Apostle in Bonds, and perpetrated shocking parodies on the comic event in the style of "The Ballad of Reading Gaol."

Luckily this tactical error was not repeated. The sum for which he was "quodded" was paid all right in the end and after that he kicked no more at the pricks and forked out like a man. And he got "the experience" all right. During the daily prison walk he had contrived to converse with Those Charming People, expert burglars, fraudulent clerks, and stout-hearted business men who, refusing to pay their rates,

compassed a rest cure, found themselves able to obey their doctor's orders *re* smoking and drinking, and, moreover, got off paying the sum for which they suffered since it appears that a man cannot be tried again for the same offence.

I went to see him without Order of Release or collie-dog like the lady in Millais's picture, but shy and nervous, escorted by the faithful René Byles. I was inducted into a place that looked like a stable with a manger, where there was, however, no straw or refuse. I waited in front of a window with a pane not of glass but such stuff as meat-safes are made of, and presently a queer, grimacing figure surged up behind it and spoke to me in a voice strangely unlike the editor's own. He was a little hysterical but making the best of it. In ten minutes he told me what he had to eat, what he did all day—which was nothing—and how he had contrived to get the warder, sent in to show him *how* to make his bed, to make it *for* him on the plea of writer's cramp and general incompetency; of the one book from the prison library that had been doled out to him to read: "A Story for Girls," by Mrs. L. T. Meade, and his deprivation of half an hour of his promen-ade because, being a Catholic, he had to take that out in going to chapel.

And on Saturday, because next day was Sunday, two days of his sentence were commuted and he came out. Mr. Byles and I took him to The Continental near Victoria, and made him who had barely eaten for a week, "get outside" a beefsteak. He had the usual complaints to make of prison fare—shocking stews, high meat, four little brown loaves of bread a day, which he could not touch because they were wet in the middle, and gruel. I treasured up these details because if, some day, I was sent to prison as a suffragette, this was what I should have to eat. He handed me a piece of

wax, a needleful of pack-thread and a small tab of sack-ing. He had been making post-bags. I treasured this, too. And when we got home my maid unpacked his bag, and marvelled at his socks, three pairs sewn up into tight balls. I said I supposed that the children in the house where he had been staying had been having a game with them. When I questioned him he told me that, bored with Mrs. Meade's book, he had tried to relieve the tedium by practising the Cinquevalli "touch," endeavouring to keep the three woollen billiard balls going off his back and arms at the same time.

Then, when I thought he could bear it, I gave him some heavy news from Germany. Two days ago his Aunt Laura had died. She was his very rich aunt. Her will, altered an hour before her death, made her so well-rubbed-in, thumping legacy to her nephew doubtful till January, 1911, and contingent on his good behaviour. So, through her sudden death—she had had a shock, news from England, *on dits* about her favourite nephew—he had lost quite a lot of money in hand and his children's future. His judgement was slightly distorted by the illness consequent on a week's starvation—for how could he eat the things he was given to eat? And he could not get rid of the idea that what had killed Tante Laura was hearing that he was "doing time." That, as a matter of dates, seemed possible; after all, as he said, you can get to Münster in Westphalia in less than twenty-four hours, and she had died two days after he had been gaoled. His Majesty's four loaves of "sad" baked bread a day had made the prisoner ill, not because he ate them, but because he didn't, and there was little else "to follow," as we say in the world of freedom.

The May number was out, and Hermosa was left in charge, as usual, of the Review, and we—my mother and Elizabeth, whom I found I could tolerate because

she was going back to Königsberg, nor did I grudge her her solatium—went to a place that he knew of—the scene of one of his books. Fordingbridge is a dull, quiet village set in flat green meadows cut up with dykes and ditches, so that when you drove, what with crossing and re-crossing these little runlets, the dogcart seemed to be going round and round like a kitten after its own tail. We were within a drive of Salisbury and Wylie and Longford and Winterbourne Stoke where he had lived in early days. The Bell Inn was all right.

We would walk in the dusk up the great ridge from the old house at the far end of Chicklade Bottom, and up the long hill to Stockton Wood, to listen for the nightingales. We hoped to track down the mysterious Mr. Hudson and bring him out of his lonely *cache* to make merry with us. What a fine motive it was for walks! It was the Hudson country—the wild, lonely Argentine had made it his own, and we never drove through Marten or Broad Chalke without feeling that he was watching us pass in our dogcart, peeping from behind the drawn blinds of some rough peasant's cottage in which he would have taken up his abode in quest of intimate details of the habits of swallows and solution of the mystery of the laying of the cuckoo's eggs. But this time we did not meet him, although he afterwards told me that he had been actually living in Marten on the day we drove through. At Fordingbridge I heard, for the first time, the crude, harsh shout of the nightingale, for all the world like the wail of a beggar's baby abandoned under a hedge. I told the naturalist about that long afterwards, and he related to me the story of Procne and the slain child, saying that what I had heard was surely the cry of Philomela: "Swallow, my sister, O sister swallow. . . ."

The editor bought a kodak, and snapped me and the cart and the monuments. Every morning we went to the local chemist and paid for some blackened sheets of

gelatine paper that represented his efforts of yesterday. Our landlady, with the scriptural name of Abi, used to wonder why I treasured them.

It was also the country of the novel he was writing. I found a title for it in Milton :

With store of ladies, whose bright eyes  
Rain influence and judge the prize !

And I found in a tablet in the porch of Salisbury Cathedral a name for the heroine. The Lady Dionissia de Egerton de Tamville was a portrait of the Beauty at home—pining—calling for me to come back and chaperon her to balls.

It was done, and we returned to the orders and summonses and bailiffs, of which I was getting my share. For as early as February I was right up against the family. There had been murmurings even from the farthest North. My nicest sister, backed up by our Aunt Jane, was getting nervous. The ball of family sedition was set rolling by this pious lady. “ And she who meant no mischief, made it all ”—Aunt Jane, my mother’s youngest sister, who had been the beauty of the family in her day, backed up by her godchild, whom I will call Goneril, the youngest and best-looking of ours !

My mother made Aunt Jane a yearly allowance—practically kept her out of her own earnings as a novelist in the seventies. She made it a principle not to spend my father’s money on any but his own family. My mother’s cheque went regularly to her every three months, signed, dated, and enclosed with a kind letter in her own large, clear handwriting. She had held a pen for many hours a day since she was eighteen, and she was now eighty. But Aunt Jane got a “ scunner.” Was her sister’s money being as carefully husbanded as it ought to be ? Aunt Jane had heard tell of expensive Morris papers at six shillings a yard being put even on to the walls of the

upstairs rooms—she naturally did not see why, now that there were so many pretty, cheap papers, my mother should persist in getting up her house Pre-Raphaelite—and of slight additions from time to time . . . and, though it was only a bathroom, it was all the same an addition to *my* property. Aunt Jane did not think that I ought to “beautify my own property at the expense of my mother’s income” and those who had a right to expect to inherit from her. “Beautify” was perhaps a funny word to use about such a necessary improvement, and one which Dr. Barton had ordered, too! Later on, which added to her chagrin, she heard of a sort of pantry or cloakroom added on to the ground floor, *at my own cost*. But she was not apprised of that. Perhaps I never cared to impart the knowledge. I was proud, and disdained to justify my conduct of household operations to people whom it did not immediately concern. I expected my mother to live to ninety, like her grandfather, the truculent vicar and land agent, for he doubled those parts and made history in Gainford.

And even Goneril, who possessed great rectitude when it was not obscured by passion, admitted that “I had all the trouble of Mamma!” But now, this man . . . about the house . . . an author . . . one of “Violet’s queer fishes,” like that editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* she brought North to stay with her godfather the Canon once. . . .

Goneril was the mother of the Beauty whom I took out, and in her fastness of Gateshead Aunt Jane had heard that I led a very giddy and godless life in London among all these artistic people. She did not at all approve of the Beauty’s being allowed to visit me perpetually, practically to live with me and go about among them. I was no sort of lion to walk beside a beautiful, innocent Una, who loved me nearly as much as she loved her own mother.

Dear little Goneril, how I loved her! Shrewd and weak, kind and capricious, cunning and silly, and very lovely, like a Gian Bellini, with deep-blue, sombre eyes that held out the message—alas! of but a small soul, askew, discomfited, and tortured—all about nothing! I explained to her that, as they had all of them gone and got married, leaving me, a bewildered, bemused authoress, to cope with the problems of the happy ending of the days of an old lady of eighty, they must really be more patient, for this difficult job nearly always falls to the spinster daughter, and, if she is decent, as I hoped I was, she is glad to undertake it. But that they should remember that it is not so nice to look after an old woman as a nice man, who may look after *you*!

I do think that the position of such a one requires special protection. Unpaid nurse and caretaker, she can so easily do something to get herself called a rogue, and be proceeded against on some pretext or other, and, if she happens to have money of her own, may end in losing it all.

For the last month or so it had been sought to obtain powers to restrain me from perpetrating the particular kind of villainy to which the position of unofficial guardian renders liable nurses, companions, doctors even. Goneril was torn between her allegiance to me, the difficulty of co-relating the gossip she heard with known fact, and her imperfect comprehension of the various points at issue. I think it worried her into her grave. But Aunt Jane flourished on it, and I had the benefit of her prayers till 1920.

During this dreary acreage of time, big with menace, fraught with ominous trifles, there were "moments," satisfactions—sops to one's vanity, if nothing else. I went to stay at Smeeth, and my host gave me a message from Mr. Conrad—ill in bed—to the effect that he was

grateful to me for "being so good to his friend." The editor, still smarting, for me, from Mr. James's *laches*, was not particularly pleased to hear it and wrote quite sarcastically of a letter he had himself just received from his hero, blessing him in his incomings and outgoings, but "in a circumscribed sort of way; the outcome, as you may imagine, of a Polish Jew, plus lower-middle-class British Puritanism." Comic, the association of Conrad and the British middle class! And was he a Jew? Oh, nonsense! The editor was dyspeptic or riding one of his high horses that day. "It pleases me to bring these people to their knees. 'Enery will be the next, you will see."

And he was.

For that little *rix*e of last year was really all 'Enery's old-maidishness of spirit. He was like the ladies of Cranford, providing themselves with umbrellas and goloshes for fear of a possible downpour; clogs, lest they stepped into little pools of passion, dreading such effects of emotion as might subsist outside the four walls of a drawing-room and are not properly announced by the butler. He always, from that time, called me the "Purple Patch," and in 1913 he told me to "go on being one" and giving him teas at my club.

Later, ashamed of what I will call his *inburst*, he confessed to Mrs. P. that he "had simply kept out of it because I am too old to be mixed up in messes." He kept out of mischief by not getting into it, as old Mrs. Frank Hill used to say. The one bright spot, Mrs. P. said, seemed to have been that I had written and warned him that there might be a slight atmosphere of mess about me. There were several counts on which my presence in court might have been required. Supposing I had "called" him! 'Enery would have died. America would have squirmed. No, I would not bring whatever it was into the house, as one says of scarlet fever or measles.

And he had dilated to Mrs. P. on Mary Martindale, her charm, her beauty, which gave me something nice to tell Mary, for she was always too humble. She knew 'Enery very well. He had always admired her.

He had been ill again, and I had written to enquire. He replied. I was "Dear Violet" again!

"Lamb House,

"February 14th, 1910.

"... Don't measure my extreme appreciation of your most kind letter by this delay, or by these informal, invalidical signs. I have had to wait to be able to form the latter at all presentably—after a dreary little relapse, from which I am again picking up; and my letters have to be rare and feeble scrawls of which this is a pattern. It was a charming charity in you to write, and everything you tell me a breath of your roaring London world (gracefully and considerably bedimmed a little), wafted into a sick-room that at the end of six or seven weeks has become dismally tedious. I have turned the corner (round which convalescence has kept tantalisingly hiding and staying; I'm after it—or close on its heels probably now.) I am mostly sitting up *without* the prospect of tumbling back into the sheets of platitude. And I rejoice in your brave account of your own heroisms. They come to me like vague, confused strains and boom-booms of a Wagner opera—that there are women of confirmed genius who take ravenous nieces to London balls; I mean for the incredible Valkyrie air of *Götterdämmerung* of it. Mrs. Clifford tells me you have written—just published—something very strange and fine and fierce somewhere; would it overtax the shaken nerves of your enfeebled yet unconquered and all-faithful old

"HENRY JAMES."

I gave a series of "afternoons." They always amused my mother and were within her competence. As I was fastening the last hook of the Beauty's frock upstairs I heard the voice of the editor, who was like a child before a party, looking out of the window on the stairs into the porch. It expressed the deepest satisfaction, as if all was well in the best of all possible worlds :

"Here's James !"

Soon, settled in for the afternoon, surrounded by adoring ladies, the recluse of Rye sat complacent, holding my last new Persian kitten between his open palms, talking animatedly to the Beauty, who could not talk but *looked*. He quite forgot the poor beast, which was too polite and too squeezed between the upper and the nether millstone of the great man's hands, to remind him of its existence, and I dared not rescue it until the sentence on which Mr. James was engaged was brought to a close—inside of half an hour.

Everybody came to me. I suppose it was the Beauty's spell. Her photograph adorned Henry James's mantel-piece at Rye for long after. We rented a big garden opposite, long since built over, and we gave parties in it. At one of these I had the felicity of introducing Miss Christabel Pankhurst to Mrs. Humphry Ward, the darling Die-hard of the opposition. The Queen of our Cause was anxious to see if she could "get over her," with her puissant charm that so seldom failed. Dear, kind Mrs. Ward, to please me, consented, on the condition that Christabel did not tackle her on the subject of politics. That is how I diplomatically put it to Christabel, and she agreed to be good, but I was afraid of the sheaf of convincing pamphlets she always carried about with her on chance. She refused to lay them down—there was nowhere to lay them—but she was a woman of her word and all the while she was talking to Mrs. Ward I noticed her hands, that grasped

the papers folded behind her, quivering with the effort of repression.

We had tennis in the garden nearly every afternoon while my mother, in the white Chuddah shawl that is the uniform of old-ladyhood, looked on at a foursome, say, between Mr. Hugh Walpole and Ezra Pound and two beauties, Amber Reeves and Kitty Rome. The young American poet played like a demon or a trick pony, sitting down composedly in his square and jumping up in time to receive his adversary's ball, which he competently returned, the flaps of his polychrome shirt flying out like the petals of some flower and his red head like a flaming pistil in the middle of it. Ezra, a dear, lived near us, and was in and out all day. He was very kind to the editor, and would do any sort of job for him or me, using up his intense and feverish energy in taking down winged words at dictation, or tying up my creeper for me. He would wear my Connemara cloak or the editor's old Rossetti coat—any old covering—with serenity. Wonderful young ambitious poets of his *trempe*, confirmed artists of all kinds, mingled in our courts with the wistful Walter De La Mare and the spanking Amy Lowell, the sinister but delightful Madame Strindberg with her marmosets, painters like Jacob Epstein and Wyndham Lewis and Richard Nevinson and Gaudier Brjeska. The portrait of Ezra Pound in stone by this young Frenchman still decorates my front garden, and is actually supposed to have guaranteed my immunity from German bombs during the raids. It, on the other hand, by some of the residents in that quarter, was supposed to represent a German *cache* for papers. I let them rave. It does look ghastly and terrible when the moon shines out, but it has *not* saved me from burglars.

Henri Gaudier Brjeska was quiet, ill-looking, almost toothless, wearing his blue workman's shirt, clean, on all

occasions. He was a Frenchman, and liable for military service in France. They could not get him here, but, inspired by patriotism, he was always offering himself. At last he crossed over, and, without waiting to take his luggage out of the Custom-house, went straight to the authorities. They actually arrested him as a deserter, sent him under guard to Dieppe, and put him into an empty cottage, *gardé à vue*, for the night. He escaped easily, and, returning on foot to Calais, by a lucky fluke got his luggage out of the Customs and returned to England again. He tried again, and this time they accepted him, and the Germans killed him at Neuville St. Vaast.

We were full of animals at home: the young owl, Ann Veronica, bought in Covent Garden market in the wrong month—an illicit purchase; the bulldog, given to *me* sooner than shut him up because he worried sheep; nine Persian cats and two parrots—one that I went to Charing Cross and fetched on receipt of a telegram—"Will you have the parrot or shall I kill him?"—and another with only one eye that we bought from the public house next door to save him from ill-treatment.

The shy Mr. Hudson came now and then, I veritably believe just to see Ann Veronica. He wanted her to be let fly, and I promised as soon as she was a little older, although she had a cage as big as a south coast railway-carriage, through whose mesh the white owls of Holland Park, visiting Ann, used to drop odd pieces of flesh as a present to her, for she was a very pretty little owl. She died untimely. Someone, certainly not a Holland Park owl—I do not lay it to them—gave her a breast of grouse, and the bone choked her. There was no sign of distress—but she would not eat. The vet. fetched a mouse—I turned away when it was put into the cage—but a minute later, when I turned round again, the mouse was sitting between the feet of the owl, peeping out, a black nozzle

from the brownness of her feathers. Mr. Hudson was good enough to forgive me. It was, I fancy, not easy for him. But would not the other owls have torn her instead of loving her, if she had been out and about, questing, competing with them in the search for food?

Cubes, pets, protégées, dinners, and dances, the latest in everything; clothes, books, plays, pictures, and ideas! Yet, *Ach, du lieber Augustin—Augustin—Augustin! Alles ist hin*, as we used to sing light-heartedly when we were children, waking possibly the saddest echoes in the grown-up hearts of parents and nurses even, as they danced *en ronde* with us.

All such things touch secret strings  
For heavy hearts to hear.

*Alles ist hin!* It seemed to be. We were poised on the point of a needle, trembling in space, and all this *rémue-ménage*, this nervous gaiety, this singing of German Lieder and performing of amateur plays at the Cabaret Club under the walls covered with Wyndham Lewis's raw meat designs, this crackling of thorns under the social pot was all very well, but it wasn't life, either of the heart or the mind. Dressing for dinners and lunches, cabbing thereto, lying awake from excess of fatigue . . . I longed to get out of this pretty, tinkling, vapid prison-palace and plunge for the last time into an Odyssey-like adventure that might ultimately end in the peace of ancestral halls. Peace, too, in my heart, or what passes for my heart, which the illuminating flash of a few months ago had shown me was not dead, but still susceptible of pity and terror, which is tragedy and life.

And something did happen; the devil's cauldron that had been preparing succulent sorrows for me ever since 1908 boiled up. . . . Something that would hinder me

of my prospective freedom and import stern considerations of duty into my life for a term of years, short or long. The Beauty, my innocent little adherent, was swept off in the rushing flood of calumny, removed lest she should be involved in "the sorry scheme of things," and, all unconscious, was paying her last visit to me, at least during her grandmother's lifetime.

Her grandmother's condition was parlous, not as regarded her health, fair for a woman of eighty—"a little chronic heart-disease," that was all. My mother, the friend of Robert Browning, of all the Rossettis, of Ruskin and Ford Madox Brown, who was, as a young girl, the toast of the county, one of the wittiest women of her time, had, since my father's death, gradually gone tiresome, peevish, melancholy, irresponsible, "dothery" as she herself called it in her North Country speech. Yet she still had wonderful moments, when the poor last sum of her excellence would flash out in little stars of wit or bursts of staggering dialectic that were startling, and disturbing, but always tempered and annealed by emulcents from the deep well of tenderness that was her heart.

She had the meed of her sometimes astonishing frankness; she was a wonderful talker. And Arnold Bennett used to like to listen to her much better than talking to me or the Beauty. She and I used to sit neglected in a corner of the room playing spelicans, while my mother scintillated, destroying reputations—of a hundred years ago, *bien entendu*—with a single word, and as suddenly building them up again by a favourable anecdote, summoning up the past, the glories of the fifties in London or the vagaries of members of the old northern stock of which she came.

Her memory for old times was vivid, but it failed almost entirely to recall the minor happenings of the day before yesterday. She had one "phobia" by now—only

one—the mania of approaching destitution, the dread of dwindling dividends which comes on people who in their day of power and strength have been “careful,” who, all their lives, have husbanded their resources and saved their money for the good of those that are to come after them—not a modern trait! Her business instinct, once so strong, was necessarily in abeyance but, in her own phrase, it was “at the back of what I am pleased to call my mind,” and she was as chary of “parting” as the most grudging of guardians could have wished. I would have to stand over her for half an hour to get her to sign a modest cheque for the butcher.

Her pass-book, which she needed not to consult, since her day of investment was over, reposed safely in the ward of her bank-manager. She banked in Durham. Now and then her lawyer, Mr. “Augusta” Webster, husband of the famous poetess, Mrs. Augusta Webster—would come to see her, and the maid washed the key of the safe and papers were brought up on the kitchen tray. I was not present—Mr. Webster would not permit that—so I never knew what she was after, little generousities to us children, done on the sly mostly. As a matter of fact, her largesses to me made trouble for me after she was dead. From her desk, where she kept her stamp collection carefully locked, she would sometimes take out and show me a large envelope on which was written in red ink, OUR GRAVE. It had been purchased for my father sixteen years before, and it was to be got out again in 1912. I had not thought it would have been so soon.

In her wardrobe was a parcel containing a smart nightgown and a pair of stockings for her to be buried in without which she never travelled. Sometimes she showed it to me. These demonstrations signified, peeping out, that quality in her—the northern, Valkyrie-like hardness and grimness that interested Mr. Bennett. Her wonderful figure and her beautiful hair, that D. G.



MY MOTHER



Rossetti had so admired, constituted her best claim to looks, and a plateful of grey, not brown, plaits wreathed her head on the day she lay in her coffin. She had published over a dozen novels, and had been well paid for them, and had been on the staff of the *Athenæum* under Norman McColl, and of the *Spectator* under Hutton and Townsend.

This woman of parts, her mentality obscured merely by the natural incidence of age, it was now sought to restrain ; in so many words—put into a cheap asylum. I contested the absurd proposition tooth and nail, but like the kid of Monsieur Séguin who “fought the wolf all night and in the morning he ate her.” . . . My puny resistance—as strong as I could make it—was overcome.

I was alone to fight them. J. L. F. M. H., or Joseph Leopold, as I had taken to calling him, since that strange official christening at Brixton, was absorbed in his own worries and complications. He was no manner of use. Indeed, when he had time to think about it, he desired me, for my own comfort and his, to desert, to take my hand off the helm of my mother's affairs and leave her and her lawyers and the family to do for her and with her what they would.

What they would ! I could not leave her to that fate. And my Fiduciary Position that they had forced on me was becoming too harassing for words ; the hints, the accusations of peculation, of intimidation were ridiculous, but they hurt. I came to consider a certain concession that our dear old family doctor was advising me to make in order that my mother might remain under my charge and Goneril, under the rose, and unbeknown to Aunt Jane, was seconding him.

What the doctor wished was for me to help him to keep the matter in his own sympathetic hands, and press him to certify my mother to be, from loss of memory, incapable of managing her own affairs, and to suggest

that her daughter, who had never left her for more than a month together, was the proper person to take care of her as receiver of her estate under the Court of Lunacy.

I had, in my selfish heyday, ever so little neglected her. I resolved to make up for it now. I would obey the doctor and beg to be so appointed, and, as I understood, make the sacrifice of my own liberty. For of course I could not go and live anywhere else. I must be more or less to hand, there to receive the visits of fine gentlemen, frock-coated sons of Peers coming at nine o'clock in the morning, or earlier, to catch me napping and find out whether I kept my mother clean.

A nurse must be got, and I myself must be certified by a couple of respectable persons of character as competent and kind—it runs somewhat like that—and of good report in the neighbourhood in which I lived. I appealed to two unprejudiced witnesses, that is to say, not special friends of my own, to an old college friend of my father's, and with him Honorary Fellow of Corpus, Lord Courtney of Penwith, and to Mr. William Alexander of Aubrey House, where my sisters and I had played in rooms decorated by Whistler in pale, pure colours, a decorative scheme originally meant for Mr. Leyland's Peacock Room.

And, so true it is that we tend to become what the people around us would have us be, that my mother complied with her keepers, and changed from that moment, beginning to play the part assigned to her by the regents of her destiny—gentle, amiable, pleasantly wool-gathering and physically incompetent and useless. I mean that she never again lifted a finger to help herself, put on a shoe, or plait her own hair. She ceased to write or type or copy out my manuscripts for me, as she had been doing, or play various patiences in ways invented by herself. No more roaming about the house or interfering with her own servants. The nice nurse mastered

her. She stayed quietly in her own "apartments," and looked out of the window at the garden she would never tend again. In short, she began to die—the Hades-like death we decree for those whom we have feared and loved, the exercise of whose volition has proved a little troublesome to us, who are still in the swim. She had not a penny of her own, or a purse to put one in, not a postage stamp; everything she had was held by the Court for her children. She had been over-generous, in truth, but it was her own considerable earnings from literary sources that she had made free with.

She entered, as the French say, *en agonie*—into "The Time" that her friend John Ruskin had spoken of: "A time, short in happy lives—but—always a Time."

*Fate's Finger Points to Germany?—A Useful Holiday—The Mystery of Aunt Laura's Will—I write to The Countess—The Rhine Boat—Pax Germanica—Goneril and Regan fade out—Joseph Leopold's Relations—Cousin Mimi on English Wild Women and German Divorce Law—Aunt Emma desires him for the Fatherland—Family Title to be Revived—The Power of Suggestion—Nauheim—The Tzar and Tzarina—The Kaiser's Darling—The Countess's Counsel—Joseph Leopold to Giessen—Rechtsanwalt John—The Great Resolve—Count von Aschendorf—Nationalisation—Aunt Emma's Joy—Wheels within Wheels—Marburg and the Students—International Law—Ritter Olaf—"And I too will have on my arm someone I like very much."*

I WAS not yet in what lawyers call "the saddle." I desired a last flutter, and—I suppose it was Fate—the society of the little East Prussian Elizabeth and the sudden tragic and unexplained seizure of Tante Laura, the strong woman of the fifties, had given me to think, and I was growing to have an obsession—to go to Germany—of all dull places. It might have been a hunger for the sight of decently, sensibly arranged German things, German customs, German institutions, everything but German cooking. The *décor* of Germany was to me like the background of a fairy-tale—a familiar one of Grimm's. The first child's book bought for me by my mother was "Holy Grimm," as the little Burne-Jones boy used to say.

My German nurse, Milly, from Paderborn, the home of folk-lore and superstition, had for the time made me and my sisters into such little Germans that it was found useless to give us an order or scold us in any other tongue. French nurses at eight years old made an end of that, but I was ready to put out a very loving tentacle to the land of the Frog Prince, Trusty Henry, Rose White

and Rose Red ; the Stork and the Almond Tree. Moreover, Germany was the country where, in the early fifties, my father and mother, in their great need breaking through the Victorian rule of chaperonage, both temporarily emancipated from proprieties by their morbid fear and apprehension of blindness, had escorted each other across the Channel to claim the services of the old Eye doctor who had trained Pagenstecher and Meurer, to whom mamma had recommended Rossetti. The Hofräth De Leuw was grandfather to Mrs. Haydn Coffin. His patients had colonised the village of Gräfrath. George du Maurier was one of them, and you will find a description of the little Klinik in *The Martians*.

And as for Joseph Leopold, there was his Uncle Friedrich at Warnford and his Aunt Antonia and his Aunt Emma and his Cousin Mimi at Boppard on the Rhine, not a stone's throw or a German *lustige* shout from the Lorelei Rock that my father painted, not to speak of one hundred and thirty nine Hueffers in the town of Münster alone.

"Let's go to Germany for a holiday," I said, and Fate with her finger on her lip, stood monitory—but let us go.

Why should we not beat up the German clans and find out the mystery of Tante Laura's death, and all about everything, before I was definitely tied to my mother's apron-strings?—a sheep dog, liable to be called to heel at any moment, sure to be sworn at should it venture to move independently or fail to round up its sheep properly. And, *re* Tante Laura's death, why should not Joseph Leopold go and explain to his surviving aunt, her sister, why he had been obliged by circumstances over which he had not control to take no notice of it? I am ashamed to say that I was mercenary enough to remember that there were only two shaky lives between him and a fortune, and, anyway it would be a great adventure!

I didn't want to ask my mother to finance me, as usual, on my holiday. No, not any more. I cast about, and,

no advance on a new novel being available, I sold a picture of my father's that my godfather had given me years ago and that Ruskin had admired. It nearly broke my heart to part with it, but at least it went to my father's native town; the Mayor and Corporation of Liverpool purchased it of me for the local gallery. I got a hundred and fifty pounds.

The hordes of ruffians that, on the declaration of war, poured out of Germany appeared to most English people to come from lands as far, as alien, as savage, as Timbuctoo. More's the pity! A greater inter-sympathy might have averted it. A good friend of mine, a globe-trotter, was living at Nauheim. She was a widow and at a terrible loose end, and would, I fancied, easily be persuaded to come and chaperon me. "That Freedom" I had and had had always since I began to publish; "That Chaperonage" was now a great deal more important to me. Indeed, it was a *sine qua non*. One little social slip, and for my mother the cheap asylum, and for me everlasting remorse.

We would go down the Rhine in Hueffer-run boats from Tilbury to Rotterdam, through Holland and Düsseldorf and Cologne, past the Rhine castles, and on to Mainz and Heidelberg, where the students fight. We would sleep and eat on the boat, going on shore wherever we stopped if it seemed good to us.

So it was settled, and the Countess was written to. She agreed, delighted and would meet us at Tilbury. No more unchaperoned would I be, however virtuous. I was too old to be a New Woman. She was an ideal old lady. She had neither temper nor temperament. No initiative, like an easy-chair in the room. It would be a delightfully lazy trip and soothe our nerves, all on edge since "Blood upon the Buttercups." The boat would go very slowly; we would be sitting, reading, eating, talking, singing if

we chose, on the upper deck, looking down on the lower where they would be loading and unloading cargo. We should never know when or how long they were going to stop, but we knew that we should spend a night moored to the pier at Cologne. And we should get off for good at Assmanshausen, where this good German—or was she an Austrian?—had engaged us rooms. Joseph Leopold had written to the relations at Boppard and bidden them wave a white tablecloth, just as Ruskin used to do for us children when we were rowed across the lake from Coniston to Brantwood.

There were amusing people on the boat, too. There was a large mass of flaccid tenor who bore the name of one of Europe's prime operatic favourites. He never left the dining-room, but lay there covered in shawls, as if he had been poured out, from meal to meal. Aubrey Beardsley's lovely mother, all turquoises and lace, ran about the decks and talked German. There was a nice little band at one end of the upper deck. . . .

As we passed the Lorelei Rock all the Germans except the tenor, who was Italian, and not on deck, broke into : "*Ich weiss nicht was soll es bedeuten . . .*" I was also *traurig*, and a thought would *not* go out of my mind. . . . I had had a letter from home.

Law—I won't call it justice exactly, but certainly blind, like her—had taken the occasion of my absence to smite a poor old woman of eighty to whom sorrow had only left eyes to weep and to read with, and susceptibilities frayed by years of use but still vivid enough to be hurt. My maid had written to tell me that yesterday my mother's lawyer had sent his chief clerk to South Lodge with a summons. Mr. Lane had been chosen probably because of his sympathy with my mother and me and all those on whom, for one reason or another, tribulation had found a billet. He was a man so kind and understanding that when poor Wilde, another

on whom the hand of the law lay heavy, had been brought up from Reading to appear *re* his bankruptcy, the grateful poet had given him, in gratitude for his *petits soins*, an original manuscript poem of two stanzas which I had had the pleasure of selling for him to Robert Ross, who collected, as everyone knows, any existing scrap in this author's handwriting. It was this Mr. Lane's duty to penetrate into my mother's chamber and, in pursuance of it, rehearse to her a document which informed her that she was "a person who, through mental infirmity arising from age, was incapable of managing her own affairs . . ." and that if she objected to such an order being made she must sign such objection and file it at the office of Master Theobald within three clear days at the Royal Courts of Justice.

Eighty years of age, and anxious to manage *anything* ! But dividends will come in and cheques will go out, and wastage may go on for ever. . . . Presents she could still give. . . . She must not. . . .

What a mockery ! For, supposing that the poor lady did with all her heart desire to protest, how could she have been certain of procuring the machinery to do so ? Her rheumatic fingers could not hold a pen, and a nurse, schooled by mail clad guardian angels, might refuse to take a letter down at dictation. And where would be her purse, unused for years, and would it have a stamp in it and, even supposing she could have managed to write and send such a letter to the proper quarter, would it be accepted as against the opinion of the doctor who certified her ?

Lane told me afterwards that never, in the whole course of his engagement as clerk to my mother's solicitors, had he performed any task so repugnant to him. He said when he was introduced into the room as a visitor he hardly dared to tell the calm, dignified, clear-speaking old lady that she was a mad woman, for

that was what it practically amounted to ; that she had listened patiently to his shamefaced mumbling of the summons, and only said, when he had quite finished, that there was a gentleman in the house whom she could consult and would like to have come to her. She meant Joseph Leopold, whom she was fond of because he had " a voice like his grandfather." But he was at that moment getting on to the Rhine boat at Rotterdam ! Then, as Mr. Lane said, evidently disappointed, she sat still and made conversation with him instead of dismissing him as he deserved to be dismissed. And the nurse told me afterwards that my mother was really bitterly offended and hurt all the time, and cried for three days, reproaching her children and reviling them, as King Lear reviled, but less gently, his Regan and Goneril. " And Janey ! " she kept saying. She had not seen her sister Jane for twenty years.

And that was what made me so *piano* going down in the pleasure-boat, with the little orchestra at the prow accompanying the Germans, who broke out into lusty song, singing *Der Wacht am Rhein* as they went past Duisberg and Düsseldorf and Crefeld. Factories with their belching chimneys—all the material of wealth—set down squat in level pastures where the placid, red-backed cows stood knee deep in grass, pushing through the reeds to drink. The colours of everything, since Rotterdam, were not positively distasteful but raw and strident, as they always are in Germany—like a Holman Hunt picture. Nothing " pretty-pretty " anywhere. The mentality of Germany always suggests to me a harsh voice, a loud colour, a blatant gesture, a sentence spoken in a bar or on a racecourse. But over all a peace, self-evident, that does not by any means pass understanding, for it is the peace of good sense and good digestion—the lotus eaters, satiate with some sedative, as potent and less poetical than the Hermes-gift of the herb moly !

The boat moved very slowly. With a *Schleier* over my hair—for it is not considered decent for a Frau or a Fräulein to uncover their heads out of the house—I sat on the long slats that made the seat under the white rim of the boat, and looked out and thought inward, while Joseph Leopold played patience and conceived romances. Floating along thus, we seemed a part of, and made one with, this complacent, weighty and seriously gliding vessel that was more like him than me. I saw that the grind of our opposite temperaments, forced together into the long, long fight that common existence is, would produce its own peculiar form of erosion. Of course we both had faults, each of us the one or two skyscraping ones, but these, so far, were held in check—kept well in hand in the gallant attempt to make a good thing of it. We two—who were to “rule the world,” in lover’s parlance—must do our best to make our own corner of it healthy. I must manage to play up properly to a genius, and, as a hardy motorist once said to me, “not clutter up the brake!” Good books were to be written and money to be made—oh, the pity of it! For the urge of that necessary materialism may be a spur to talent but is death to genius, as I conceive of genius. A wage-earner and father of a family must not waste time over style, unless it comes naturally, or be cross at luncheon because he has spent the whole morning in finding *le mot juste*.

And character will peep in. I had not realised that this particular genius liked everything arranged for him except his recreations and expected, like the Psalmist to have “his feet set in a large room,” the desk of life laid out for him with pen, papers and rubber bands and all literary conveniences. So that, having made known to an obedient family his determination not to be interfered with, he could shut the door on writs and duns, bores and viragos, refusing to be confronted with any

of the problems that beset an author unfortunately doubled with a man. He refused absolutely with his intellect to face them, preferring to oppose to adverse circumstances the fleshy back that an Egyptian slave might bend to the lash of an overseer. He would bear quite meekly, like the "exceedingly patient donkey" to which his father had compared him in boyhood, the weals of fate, or, like a German of to-day, go about his business quietly under the occupation of the Ruhr.

But I am different. I won't bear things unless I have to. I have to live always in the boiling middle of things or, to mix metaphors, in a world of thin ice and broken eggs that will never make an omelette. It seems to be my fate always to be up against people who prefer solvency to sentiment and pawkiness to passion. Despite my fighting spirit, through prudent instincts transmitted to me by the mother I have described, I make ridiculous attempts to placate the powers, "going round behind" as it is called, but quite boldly and above board, sitting down on the hornet's nest, stealing into the camp of the enemy, and offering desperate and romantic concessions. It is never any good, but I have done it. It is as if Don Juan were to go offering cups of tea to the statue of the Comandante in order to persuade him not to come down! I was always one that, refusing to notice when the signals were against me, made haste to the rendezvous that is to bring down misfortune on my head—*vide* Marie Louise of Prussia in her letter to Napoleon.

But meantime the Rhine was very wonderful. It was the first big river I had seen, and knocked our little Thames ditch into smithereens. . . . We went ashore at Cologne and dined, and I went to a beer-garden for the first time, and drank, or pretended to drink, a tankard

of *kleiner helles*, while Joseph Leopold had three of *grosser dunkles*. So on board again, and to bed.

At about seven next morning I woke, and heard the *clapotement* of water as usual at the side of my narrow bed. As we gently fared along, the white light of morning came in at the little porthole window. I looked out. Deep called to High, and no man saw but I, for all the world was asleep except, presumably, the man at the helm who was guiding this commercial craft along the cañon between two cliffs—the passage between Rolandseck on one side and the Drachenfels on the other. The delicate golden beams lit up a panorama which, like a picture hung on a wall in a lonely gallery, seemed to have been waiting all these years for my British eye to rest on. For the Rhine is Germany's achievement, like a national air or a national statue or a national Church builded of her own masons. The Rhine is her national *Aussicht*, of which the nation that put up the *Germania* in a moment of artistic forgetfulness, has yet the gumption to be proud. We went slowly between the cliffs, like walls where green vines, closely packed, crawled up to summits tipped with castles, hoary and brown, the robber strongholds of the dreadful past. The verdure slung like a curtain down from the sky . . . like a hanging garden, to the edge of the water that passed along evenly in pride of power and strength, its dark flow delving into scarped banks, its glancing ripples breaking up the level blackness near the middle, where I was being borne along through the gateway of Horn into the land of my dreams and *Pax Germanica*. It all faded out—the stale horror, like beer spilled on public house tables, of Aunt Jane, Regan and Goneril, Brixton and Charing Cross, lawyer's clerks and affidavits, and statements that seem to state nothing.

The relations did not hang out the table-cloth for the very good reason that they had not been advised of our arrival, but, as the boat swung round the curve of

Boppard, Joseph Leopold pointed out to me the little villa and its garden, box-and-laurestinus-bordered, for all the world like one in Addison Road or St. John's Wood, where Aunt Emma lived, and Mimi her invalid daughter and Carolina her cook. There was the usual pleached walk along the shore where I should walk with Mimi. There was one in every village we had passed, but this was a very fine one.

We got ourselves out of the Freiligrath room into the annexe and carried her with us. It was much nicer than the old historic hotel. The annexe had clear, clean, straight passages, a strip of matting in the middle, into which light, high rooms opened; clear, pale, bedroom china, the decorations sensible, chaste, appropriate, with no old-fashioned nonsense about them—perhaps a *soupeçon* of *art nouveau*—and under one's large, gracious windows all the time the ripple of the river, and on the nether shore the ferryman in his boat, moored in mid-stream. . . . The Island of the Bishop Hatto—where the rats pursued the man who held the grain—created the noise, for the Rhine is too majestic to ripple for nothing, like our little parlour streams at home.

At night we wandered in the white road, all bordered with vines and the slim, sliding rails, well lubricated, that do not hinder the fox at his thievish work. "Take us the little foxes—the little foxes that devour the vines——" Yes, we smelt them. . . .

There is room, or they make room, for a single line on either side of the river. The object of this is of course utilitarian, but the train, with its bulldog breast and following of lighted carriages rattling by on the opposite bank, reminds one less of modern civilisation than of the Worm of German legend with his tail of gold. Behind us are the woods of the Eiffel, one of the great silent forests of Germany, birdless for lack of water, so desperate their *Noth* that, like the deer and the wild boar, these little

creatures have to come for a drink all the way to the river that is threading the woods of enchantment on its way to touch at the noisy centres of commerce.

Terrible, unblest wildernesses, stretching back and back, holding God knows what in their depth—witches, robbers, and wild beasts. As you walk you can hear the boughs cracking. But as for human beings, you can walk all day without meeting a *Förster*, in his grey-green clothes, or a charcoal burner, stooping over his fire that reddens the boles of the big trees.

Next day I went, as suggested, by myself and called on Frau Emma G—— and her daughter in the earwiggy little villa half way up the hill. I rang the bell, and it was answered by the spare, aged woman I had been told to expect.

“*Ist es Carolina?*” I murmured persuasively.

The *gnädige* Frau was indisposed, but the *Fräulein* was in, and entertained me. I took her to tea at the hotel as I had been told to do, for it would be a tremendous jaunt for her. I found Mimi the most sentimental of the sentimental, as charitable as it was possible to be. She went once a week with a basket, covered with a white cloth, containing delicacies for the sick poor of Boppard, and once a week in the steamer as far as the Lorelei Rock and back, and joined in the chorale, weeping and feeling better when she came home. And so she did when I told her of Joseph Leopold’s illness, of my own, and of the sorrows we had both undergone. I did not tell her about Brixton—too strong meat for the babe of life that is the German *Alt-Mädchen*!

Mimi G. read poetry and my books, but with difficulty—much less difficulty than that with which I spoke German. I have wondered how much we each made each other understand. It was more a matter of sympathy than anything else, though, after a few meetings, I had taken some sort of stock of her mentality and knew what

+ Hans Holbein, the book, that was  
 begun under much sorrow, we  
 read it with the greatest interest.  
 Mimi sends her love to both of you,  
 she is happy to possess a new Tren-  
 chen, a sweet little thing, the former  
 having been killed by a cruel auto.  
 last summer. - May the soon begin-  
 ning year lead you to the villa Goesens



AUNT EMMA'S HOME AT BOPPARD



would "fetch" her. She was too careful of appearances to come to Assmanshausen—my very chaperon frightened her, being a *divorcée*. She preferred that I should come to her, and she was very anxious that I should see the various view points that abounded in the district. They all have a little tea-house. German women will climb and perspire nobly for any view-point, even one that they know like the palm of their hand. We all four went together—I was the only "quite English" member of the party—in the Zahnradsbahn up to the famous *Aussicht* at Fleckhardt's Höhe. It rained. On getting out of the funicular with two large sets of German natives I had the prospect of a three-mile tramp before me, and murmured at it. The women of the other parties sneered at the man of ours.

"*Er ist unter den Pantoffel*," they observed, as we turned to go down again. Thus they marked their national disapproval of the craven male and betrayed the attitude of German women generally to Him who must *Not* Obey, whoever he may be—father, husband, lover, *soupirant* or no relation at all.

Mimi, a lady who in England would have corresponded to the squire's daughter of a village parish, was in Germany something of a *femme forte* with traditions of free thinking. Her Aunt Laura had kept live lions and was a Catholic: had fought in the Kùlturkampf and stolen the corpse of an archbishop out of a Protestant church. I hope I am getting this right? Quite definitely an old maid, whose reading was not censored, she had read all about the struggle for the emancipation of women in England, though she was canny enough never to have worried her mother or the other Hueffers about it. She begged me now to tell her about women's suffrage as soon as she heard I had taken part in it and that her distinguished cousin had condescended to write a pamphlet in women's favour.

She had read—and I told her she had read it all wrong—of suffragettes stopping the carriage of the Prime Minister and pulling his beard (Mr. Asquith had none to pull), of wild women strapping themselves to large and impossible things like the Clock Tower or the Monument and refusing to come away; of the virago Christabel, riding on a meek, white horse, like the Lady Godiva, into Westminster Hall. But not the slightest glimmering of the object of it all had ever entered her head. When I told her that as long ago as 1885 a friend of mine had, at her wedding, refused to pronounce the word “obey,” she asked me, horror-stricken, if *der Herr* had not abandoned her and left the church at once? When I told her that the Herr was of the same mind as his beloved, and that the bride’s uncle, officiating, had allowed his niece to mumble her responses so that no one could be sure of what she said, Mimi, getting used to the idea, shrewdly observed that it was a pity the Lord’s daughter had left out the only thing she could honestly promise to do, since loving and honouring are dependent on the future conduct of the parties.

Marriage was a matter of behaviour, Joseph Leopold then told us and averred that in the Fatherland a husband can actually divorce his wife for nothing but disobedience. Mimi did not contradict him, but said that disobedience was *ganz schrecklich*, and cut to the very roots of society. He pressed her for a definition of Disobedience. “Oh, almost anything!” she said—neglecting one’s husband, abusing him, defaming him. A man she knew had divorced his wife just because she would persist in wearing colours that were distasteful to her lord. I said that this showed how low the status of women in Germany must be, when any stick would do to beat a lap-dog with, and Joseph Leopold said that it amounted to an admission that what both the parties

wanted was what the law wanted them to have. In fact, Collusion !

Mimi was a little outraged, but I patted Germany on the back—as, indeed, I think she deserved to be patted if Joseph Leopold spoke true—and began to tell her of the law of divorce with us and the absolutely indispensable grounds for it. Mimi shuddered. What German Frau was ever unfaithful ? How on earth should she be ? The minor peccadilloes were grounds enough. And for a wife to divorce her husband, that was *censé* never to happen ! It would be too much honour for the lap-dog.

I saw that the German mentality with regard to this important relation of man and woman had stopped at the Fairy-tale period, when the King raised a pyre for the Swan Maiden he had married and whom he presumed to be unfaithful, so that her Seven Brothers had had to come and rescue her just as she was set alight—flapping the fire out with their large white wings. Yes, Mimi had a long way to go before she could join the W.S.P.U. I tried her with some of the anomalies of our so constipated divorce law. The injustices to women it involved, which was what we suffragettes were up against and would alter when we got the vote—such as the custody of the children vested in the husband, his right to decide whether her child and his should or should not be vaccinated or brought up in this or that religion, the tyranny of the dead hand ; the husband's right to appoint a guardian for the children she had borne over the wife's head—that all seemed to Mimi perfectly just and reasonable. *Ein Mann müß sein Kinder selbst erziehen.* But when I gave her a concrete instance—what had happened to my friend, Mrs. Bernard Cato, who joined the Catholic faith some years after her marriage, so that Bernard Cato had exercised his right to take two children under ten out of her care, leaving the baby, whom she was allowed to keep until it was a year old—Mimi wept.

Marriage, a tyranny tempered by divorce, which should be used freely as being the only way in which people could bear it ! " Marry early and marry often," as George Boughton used to say when he was painting Milton in the garden of Chalfont St. Giles's, dictating dull stuff to his third wife. But of course I did not dare to make these ribald jokes to Mimi, religious *en diable* as she was. Catholics do not accept divorce as we understand the marriage. They scorn it. But, then, nothing is easier, it seemed to me, listening to her, than for Catholics to get one good enough for their needs for pounds, shillings, and pence, and under another name—Dispensation—to annul it.

If a Catholic is willing to pay for it a Catholic can divorce more easily than a " Prot." But why, if God cannot divide those whom love and inclination have not joined permanently, is the Church willing to do His dirty work for a consideration ? There is, of course, a prohibitive clause for, according to Mimi, the children of the marriage to be dissolved will be illegitimate. Prohibitive, I said to Mimi ; for no decent father living in hell, or even leading a cat and dog life with an uncongenial mate, would divorce under those conditions. But, said Mimi, that would be only temporary ; the Church would see to it that the children were re-legitimatised as soon as the Dispensation had been obtained. But, of course, the man mustn't marry again—Mimi always said "*Der Mann*" ; women weren't in it in this show.

One way or another the Church must reign, the Church could do anything that seemed good to it or expedient.

Mimi was awfully pleased to hear that the children had been brought up as good Catholics in an expensive school by the sea, where the Mother Superior was an English lady of title, and the training, apart from religious teaching, would fit them to take their place in the best and proudest English society—extras, calisthenics,

needlework, dancing, drawing, and I don't know what else. I had seen them all set forth at great length, together with the holiday fund and the bill for clothing that the father had paid that very morning. I knew that this expensive paradise in which his daughters lived was the joy of his heart—the blue ribbon of his career—far more important to him, even, than the attainment of *le mot juste*. It was practical, too. His Aunt Emma fully approved of his attitude and of the expensive presents that he procured for his girls and sent them on their birthdays—a whole peasant's costume from Marburg costing fifteen pounds had gone to one and a free-wheel bicycle to the other, with a violin to follow. . . .

"You must always take good care to preserve the love and duty of these dear children *with good gifts!*" the old aunt had written.

Mimi, in gratitude to me for the care I took of her cousin, ended by showering romantic tenderness on me. I often wonder what became of the household at the villa at Boppard in the war; did Carolina's excellent stews suffer from rationing, as ours did? Did Mimi, her love turned to bitterness, leave her belligerent cousin out of her prayers and mention him only in her Morning Hate?

The Great Catastrophe perforce severed Joseph Leopold's connection with the Fatherland. For, of course, they all heard that he had repudiated his newly gained nationality. This gesture had been taken by them as a great compliment. But he had afterwards gone and sworn allegiance to King George, obtained a commission, and was fighting against them. I never heard of any of them again after that, except once at the Cabaret Club, when Joseph Leopold, through a mistake of one of the waiters, was fetched up from the cellar, where we all were listening to Frank Harris's *Yellow Ticket*, to deal with an angry wife out for arrears of

alimony—the wife of one of the Dutch Hueffers who had seen the name on the club register and thought she had fairly got him.

A breath of England at the Krone ! One day two very young men, faring on foot to Switzerland—dear Dollie Radford's son and his friend, David, the son of Edward and Constance Garnett. The beardless future author of *Lady into Fox* stayed to breakfast with us, and passed onward down the Rhine. From Brienz he wrote that he was sending me a tortoise—it was on its way, and he hoped it would get to me before I left. It is, for all I know, still on its way, for the Countess, anxious to get back to the hectic joys of her cure at Nauheim, forced us there.

How different that was ! The deep, conscious strength of the Rhine flow, the silent forest where, if you walked for the day, you met only the kindly *Förster* with the feather stuck in his cap, was exchanged for a plot of villa residences and gardens where people lazed about holding glasses connected with their mouths by celluloid funnels. For the Countess and me a smart hotel—Bittong's—a *Kur*-intentioned place where salads were made without vinegar and you drank water or, at the best, *Faschingen*. For Joseph Leopold, some Hotel Alexandre or other, but he ate with us, and called, as it seemed to be understood he would do, every morning at Bittong's for one or the other of us ladies, was inducted into the bedroom of either—announced by a smart *chasseur* in blue. This would have upset my mother's guardians considerably if they had come to hear of it. But, as a matter of fact, there was no proper lounge at Bittong's ; the hall, in which we all congregated five minutes before dinner, was draughty.

One evening a notice was posted up begging the guests not to pursue, persecute, or mob the Tzar of Russia, who



DAVID GARNETT AND JOSEPH LEOPOLD  
AT ASSMANSHAUSEN

[p. 132]



was staying at Friedberg, three miles off, and who came in every day with the Tzaritza and her children. Poor Alix of Hesse, mortally ill, had turned as a last resource to the healing waters of her native province and her husband had complained that the Nauheimers followed him and her about and stared. This would, if continued, prevent him from coming to that place. It must be stopped. It was.

There was more than fear of mobbing ; there was the fear of the bomb. He went in danger of his life so obvious and so imminent that the craven and businesslike municipality of Friedberg had insisted on his insuring the public monuments of that place at his own expense !

It was his chamberlain's duty to disseminate fallacious announcements of his movements. When he was supposed to be going to the baths it was at the *Kursaal* you would find him ; when it was the riding school it was much more likely to be the lake. I have seen him there, a disconsolate figure, encouraging his boy to sail his tiny boat or being rowed about in one. I certainly never mobbed him. In the same accidental way I often saw the Tzaritza, in black with pearls, going in and out of the baths, her face a tragic mask, stupid, incompetent, haughty, dejected. She looked a lovely fool ; nay, hardly lovely now—the morbid shadow of a queen. And once I saw him through the windows, like glass walls, of a shop full of Venetian glass, Japanese *netsuke*, and plaques of green jade. The shopman was showing him some *objet d'art* or other, and the Tzarewitch, whose head did not come up to the counter, was with him. No one else. The door of the shop had been left open, and some sensible German passer-by had shut it. Nicholas II looked up and out—he thought he was trapped ! I saw his face through the beautiful clear glass ; it did not exhibit mere terror, for he was a brave man, but all at once it seemed implicit with a summing-up, a *résumé* of the composite agony of

all this race of kings consciously marked down for destruction. His grandfather before him—his uncle—and only the little son with his head below the counter to carry on the monstrous imposthume of Russian Royalty!

There was also a Regnant Grand Duke—he of Hesse-Darmstadt—a relation of the King of England, his features *très en Edouard*, as I could see. I was introduced to him by Count Lelöf, one of the “favourite officers of the Kaiser” with which this place abounded. The Duke’s palace at Giessen he had turned into a barracks, and now, having divorced his wife easily for incompatibility, he dissipated the rents of his dukedom, playing bridge daily in the tented verandah of the *Kursaal* or in the parterre, among the red geraniums, the blue caps of the bandsmen and the variegated toilettes of the Americans, the *cocottes* and the professional beauties. He expected to be asked out to dinner there by some or other of these every night, and was. Joseph Leopold and I used to get up early and go there for a walk among the laurels and rhododendron hedges in the gentle grey autumn mornings. Then it was deserted even of waiters, all engaged in washing up, dawdling, mock-busying themselves, holding themselves in reserve till midday, when the band would rustle into its place and the little striped red table-cloths were spread on the little tin tables.

Lelöf, whom I distinguished with difficulty—for German officers look very nearly alike—was what we should call in England “a card”! He was supposed to have hurt himself rather badly at polo, performing before the Kaiser, and this was the *chic* cause of his presence at Nauheim. The Kaiser was given out to be excessively anxious about the health of this tall, spare, eager, wasp-waisted creature. In the course of three days I both obliged and insulted Lieutenant Lelöf, and I wondered, if another day in revenge for the latter,

he would come to spit one of my friends on the point of that everlasting sword that hangs always at the side of gentlemen of his kidney, and when they sit down beside you on the most pacific occasions trails awkwardly on the ground between. At least, I was told that I had insulted him when I declared that German officers were *not always* polite to ladies in the street, and how I had been driven off the side-walk twelve years ago by an officer at Wiesbaden, who had absolutely treated me as if I did not even occupy the very small space on the path that I was surely entitled to. Lelöf fel bent his weary, small eyes with their red rims on me, and, saying haughtily, "*Wie, Fräulein? Sie sagen . . . ?*" laid his hand on the hilt of his sword. I felt it stir between us. But the Countess, who was sitting at the same table, interposed, and said that the German of the Fräulein was uncertain . . . the Fräulein had not meant. . . .

And I obliged him. He was admiring, not to say following, in the Allee every morning a young American lady who was staying, not at my hotel, but at that of Mrs. T. P. O'Connor. She had a pale, clear-cut face and firm chin, lifting out of the white jabot of her tailor-made, and neat ankles—a change for Germany!—in high-heeled shoes with a big bow on the instep.

"It is that I admire," said Lelöf fel. "It is so well tied—as if it would never come undone."

I soon got him an introduction to his enchantress, but the affair came to nothing. To the so spiritually minded favourite of the Kaiser The Dream was more than The Business. . . . But I had made good reparations, and he even wrote to me after he got home. His letter was an extraordinary document, and not at all the letter I should have associated with a German officer. It seemed quite mad!

I think the German military mind was already, in those days, beginning to be "above itself." I am sure

it had been, as Disraeli said of another form of decadence, "well guanoed" with all sorts of morbid imaginings, moral and military. Socially it was rottenish. Mr. Fortescue told someone I knew that the scandalous novels on which they were gloating over there in the Fatherland would have been seized in England. They were, when they were translated. See that novel by the great Sudermann which the late bold John Lane published—a truly wonderful psychological study which would have gained the wrong sort of readers because of its biblical name, but which was hardly out before it was withdrawn from circulation. Or read Lieutenant Bilse's *In einer kleinen Garnison*, a copy of which the slinky, rather bestial, and exceedingly vain author presented to me specially bound with silver clasps when he came to my garden-party in 1906. Lelöfkel was probably a superior specimen of the race that was growing up in Germany, corrupted by the evil communications of such novels as I have described and the moral and military divagations of Bernhardt and Treitschke. Such sadic cruelty as was perpetrated by the flower of Germany's manhood in 1914 was, I imagine, less the outcome of beer and innate brutality than of absinthe and a creeping paralysis of moral ideas. They were all, at least, potential Ludwigs of Bavaria.

I had always thought till those days of the Law as a free thinker or a sectarian might consider of the priesthood of a State religion in which he did not participate, and would never, D.V., need to—an establishment that did what it liked with its own and took occasion to nag, plague, rack, and sometimes to make *autos da fé* of persons who, coming under its control, controverted its doctrines and disobeyed its decrees. But that is, of course, if one was fool enough to consult it, put oneself into its hands! Old-fashioned people used to say,

"Always settle out of court. Never go to law if you can help it." But how if Law comes to *you*? Courts were made to be kept out of, but how if other people take you into them? I had never imagined myself or any of my family coming within a hundred miles of court, and I have been in three or four already. And now I was under the law, a frequenter of its ugly, cock-eyed, dingy palace that had been actually designed by my father's friend, George Edmund Street, and gained him a knighthood—prone to suffer goodness knows what scrapings of one's vanity, digs of opposing counsel; lifting of the lid of one's heart, its piteous loves and inchoate hatreds disclosed under the low arch of heaven whence came no sort of help! Though, terrified one had appealed on one's own account to justice and its priests . . . some kind, some cruel, but all very urbane.

Familiarity bred not contempt so much as disgust. One had read *Phantastes* and had a sense of wandering in a forest at night, or knocking oneself against the boles of malignant, half-humanised trees, one's face stung by the lashes of savage boughs, stumbling over snags, falling into the pits and gins that man lays for man, entanglements—unfortunate phrases—the Wood of the World!

There were compensations, of course. There were amenities, messages from the enemy's camp. The Beauty still wrote sweetly to the editor, discussing the parish reading club that was now "on" the *Odyssey*, after Sir Walter Scott's *Rokeby*.

There were sweet and fallacious letters from Mary Martindale and wise and sensible ones from her horse-breaker Aunt Stringer, from whose husband's colliery I supplied my mother's coal-cellar. Mrs. Stringer was a great stand-by till a horse broke *her*—fell on her and killed her.

Even Goneril—dear little Goneril that I loved—

sneaked a letter to me now and then, sermonising me, calling me a thief and a liar, as her way was, but containing vague aspirations for an improvement in our relations if I would confess my errors and be clean. The Receivership plan was going to placate everybody. . . .

The time drew near when I must go home for it. And I wanted so much to see Marburg and the potters making pots on the high-road, and the students that fight, letting other students slice off the tops of their crowns like an orange so that they can then exhibit the scar. The Countess was willing and we were to go on Thursday to the Hotel Zum Ritter, on the Elisabethen Platz, and I should see plenty of blue-ribbed crowns.

But before Thursday—and I did not know how fateful a day it was—bidden by her who was deeply interested in us, Joseph Leopold took the train to Giessen, a university town half an hour away, and returned in time for dinner, when he told us, looking as portentous as might be with his mild blue eyes, that we *would* all go on Wednesday to Marburg as arranged and leave *him* there behind us. He was going to stay on in Germany.

He had taken one of those sudden resolutions, those sudden burgeonings of resolve, poison flowers that blow in a single day out of a concealed and tedious growth of dull misgiving, daily distastes, and nightmare apprehensions. The root of this flower was a sense of injustice and injury; Brixtons, hecklings, humblings and lowerings of natural pride had manured it; secret tears had watered it and brought it to the birth.

Some minds—not mine—move very slowly and nourish quietly, until it is very strong, a grim determination to do something foolish, the madder the merrier—or the sadder! Something justifiable, but not as the world goes for poetical justice—a phrase that used to figure so largely in the accounts by our ancestors of the violent deaths

of murderers and impious men—is, in the eyes of the law, the least valid of excuses, the most cogent in those of the layman, and, in the long run, most tragic, ineffectual, and irrevocable.

But to the distracted soul it seemed to imply an end to the law's lawful chicane, delays, and pretermissions, of tedious interim orders, worrying petitions, irritating reports, of plank beds and prison loaves, the dread of the knock of the postman or process server, the moral and mental discomfort that is the bane and impediment of masterpieces. Joseph Leopold, as he said himself in *Ancient Lights*, was "an Englishman a little mad about Good Letters." Good Letters, in the Flaubertian sense, were to him more important than king or country, wife or mistress.

For my state of mind at this juncture Joseph Leopold's simile—"a sparrow hopping about among the horses' hoofs"—would seem to be fairly correct, though humiliating. Or say the Little Tailor of Grimm, who got out of most things and many tight places because he was so small.

The way I understood and accepted what Joseph Leopold was going to do is best shown by some letters I wrote about this time to René Byles, who was, at this moment, in London, occupying Number 84, and posting on letters and being general *souffre-douleur* to us both.

Byles was sure to disapprove, being a true-born Briton, a hater of all foreigners—he was capable of calling a Frenchman "mounseer," and if he met a Japanese in the street when walking with me, would pull me out of the way lest I rubbed shoulders with him—of foreign books, foreign cookery, foreign laws and customs. The odd thing about Byles—and perhaps what made him so charming—was that he had lived half his life in Japan, and that his middle name, as well as his Norman brow and nose, bespoke him of foreign origin. The

De Beuzevilles were Huguenot refugees from the severities of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Sometimes, to tease him, I would bring up the slaughter by Huguenots of Catholics in the barn at Vassy, when he alluded to the massacre of St. Bartholomew. But where he disapproved he helped, and he was a good fighter. Every journalist remembers the row over *The Times* Book Club. Blessed be his memory!

But, so little does one know of the kinks in the cranky old chain of Providence, that my best friends would find it impossible to imagine that his help was to prove my hindrance. However, for us he fought and slaved to the very end, till one day—a sheeted ghost in the Hydro at Richmond, with pale arms flung out of bed where the blood had retreated right up to the elbow and would retreat still further—the White Death (as I would call the disease he suffered from) took him. Until he was too weak, and after—I never got such a talking to as on the last time I saw him!—he spoke his mind to me. He tried to be a slipper on the wheels of the coach that, through untried ways, was rolling on to disaster.

Hard-bitten, never very genial, thin, without an ounce of superfluous or even enough flesh on his body, extremely severe, cold and cynical sometimes, like the man of Northern France he was, he did not mince facts, as when he exhorted me gently: “not to place so much reliance on perennial charm.”

I wrote from Marburg:

“He has gone, by the advice of his Aunt Emma, who is naturally anxious to secure the continuance of the stay of such a great man and to acquire his name for Germany, to a place called Giessen, half an hour from here by train. The Countess has told him of a clever German lawyer there. He went and unearthed

him only yesterday, and he is at present busily engaged in getting papers translated. I wish I could read German. The annoying thing is that I am rather ill and due home, while I fancy from what he says, F. will have to stay on in Germany for six months in order to get it through, unless, indeed, he makes such a good impression in a month that the authorities feel inclined to declare him a German through his father's naturalisation in 1872. We are quite friends here with the Grand Duke of the particular State to which he will belong."

Byles must have been puzzled. I had to write and explain that the father of Joseph Leopold, Franz Hüffer, who shook the dust of the Fatherland off his feet and came over to England in the seventies (it seemed, at first, merely to edit the Tauchnitz edition of Rossetti's poems and play backgammon with him) had, after marrying the daughter of Ford Madox Brown, taken out naturalisation papers which might or might not have included his unborn children.

"The dear conceited Germans, you see, do not allow a whimsical father by one rash act to deprive his children of the inestimable advantage of German citizenship, and the Government makes it as easy as possible for them to resume it. They have only to *se donner la peine* of acquiring domicile and getting the burgomasters of some particular German town to accept them as persons likely to be good townsmen and rich enough to pay their rates regularly. . . . I am going to buy an Ulmer dog here at Cappel, and bring it home. I don't know what my maid will say. God knows how many more responsibilities I am going to take up! Will you be very kind and see about quarantine rules for me? One does so wonder what is going to be the end of it all?"

God knows, indeed! The sparrow hopping about among the horses' hoofs. Quarantine regulations—Naturalisation—Ulmer dogs—International law—and much else!

Indeed, there seemed to be going to be an end of me that month at Marburg. "Blood upon the Buttercups" indeed! My vision at Selsey this very spring, and the queer and beautiful poem which Joseph Leopold, quick to seize any artistic material, had written, with that for the *clou*, in June. I remembered it in these days when I seemed to be bleeding to death, and the doctor from the Klinik went into the matter so brutally that I wept. I had never been ill before. The Countess was giving him an account of my symptoms. "Up at Markese's last night, *plötzlich sie schwindelt*." It sounded to me as if she was accusing me of fraud. Here in Germany, as well as at home! Dr. Bauereisen said gently, in a voice far softer than his hands, that the *gnädige* Fräulein must be operated on at once—costing nine pounds at the klinik. I said that that was quite impossible, that I had engagements in England, and that he must mend me up for a week, say, when I would go home and get it done there—for twenty-one pounds, as it turned out. I was put to bed, and fed on *Suppe mit Ei*. Bauereisen was clever, for soon I was sitting up in bed and Joseph Leopold was dictating to me his memoirs, for which I found a name, and a bad one, as it turned out.

The last chapter of it is full of Heine and idealism. The death of the Ritter Olaf, who ran away with the King's daughter and had his head cut off by the lady's father for his pains. But what cared he? He was allowed his wedding night! He dies at midnight by the light of torches, blessing the sun, blessing the moon, the violets, and the blue eyes of his wife!

I suppose I was cantankerous, for I fell foul of a phrase in the last chapter, when the Author, "a little mad about

Good Letters"—a little, good Lord!—fancies himself arrived in his author's heaven at last, wandering among green trees and coloured lamps, listening to the whisperings of a happy crowd—his eternal desideratum—blest I, as well as him, wandering with their beloveds—"And too, will have on my arm someone I like very much. . . ."

Well, Bauereisen mended me, and the Receivership business was put off, and as Joseph Leopold liked to have me on his arm, I stayed on a little. . . .

The autumn was far advanced, and the walks down to Cappel to see the dog, to the horse fair at Warmund, up to the Wilhelmsthurm to watch the Kermesse, the slim little peasant girls, nearly bald at fifteen, dancing in costume, with Berlin woolwork sashes in violent futurist colours round their waists or where their waists . . . ? consuming between the dances the contents of the heavy beer-barrels which, in preparation for this one afternoon, had been rolled up, as were the fat German Fraus by their wholesomely perspiring husbands—men of goodwill—on to the plateau where the sward was level. But this was not for me. We would have to keep on the flat, going for our teas every afternoon in a little motor-boat down the little Lahn to a little village called Wehrda, where there was a little, sad, stale café set down in a stony garden of gravel, with trees bare of their leaves and a few tables with check table-covers blowing about in the wind that was preparing the garden for winter. Germany at a disadvantage for once!

Gloomily we sat and consumed Sand Kuchen, that seemed made of the gravel of the walk and ran out of the corners of our mouths, or chunks of cold plum tart called Pflaum Kuchen, and observed critically the *Wesen* of the future compatriots of Joseph Leopold, striped and checked women, children and bundles—checks are a positive obsession in Germany—or watched the train

on the opposite bank puffing away under the tunnel Cassel-wards, where we would go some day.

And on my birthday came the news that *I* must dally no longer abroad, and that Joseph Leopold had better bestir himself and go to live in the lodgings that he had taken at Giessen, 29 Nordanlage, so as to be near his Rechtsanwalt, Herr Paul John—pronounced Powl-yone. It looked, written, like our good old English John, but, lengthened so, it was rather sinister. . . .

Joseph Leopold saw me as far as Cologne, and I went the rest of the way alone, without the Ulmer dog and violently depressed. However, in the society of my own mother and the mother of Joseph Leopold, and Mary Martindale, and my faithful maid and Byles, I forgot the great Dane. There was the nice, ugly bulldog which had worried eight sheep, a snub-nosed darling which, after its translation from the glooms of the stable at Aldington, bit no one but me.

But again I was depressed. Beauty, who still wrote to Joseph Leopold, never wrote to me. I forced her little hand. I asked her to stay. The simple answer came :

“ Mother doesn’t want me to come.”

Her letter was to me of an indescribable pathos, for I knew Beauty loved me.

“ I only wish you had a little house in the country, and then I could. . . . I know that I am deserting you at the only time you will ever want me *again*. Dear Aunt V., I love you, but I love father too, so you must try not to be too cross with me. If you must be . . . I don’t care what you do if you stop loving me. Perhaps I deserve it, but I don’t think I do. . . .”

No, of course she didn’t, the darling ! She was just

an unsophisticated country girl—not a butterfly, as I would perhaps have had her be, but a dear little dormouse that her family was putting into the teapot, or, say, a bird tangled in the nets of Victorian conventions, unable to understand, bewildered in the wind of the flail of her mother's lawsuit.

For, weak and tottery from illness, I was hoisted into a position I deprecated earnestly, that of Receiver of my mother's estate. It was done, and I passed out of the stone-walled halls of the ugly palace of justice which my father's friend had made. I walked out alone through the iron doors that led into Fleet Street, knowing perfectly well what a welter I was going into. There were envious eyes, a hundred rods in pickle for me, weapons concealed in the boskage of Campden Hill, sharp, bright, ready to be used if I made any sort of fool of myself. Errors of judgment would be visited p.d.q. by the usual punishment meted out to unjust or even foolish stewards. The sparrow, hopping off the pavement to go home, was in dread now of the great hoofs. . . .

## 1910-II

*First Year of Exile—Marooned in Germany—Complaints—Unwise dash to England—Operation—D. H. Lawrence's sympathy—Dawn of a Year of Litigation—Prayers at the Tomb of Charlemagne—Paris and the "Rice-pale Queen"—Arnold Bennett, the Tango and the Leg of Mutton—The Children complex—We Part—Beardsley's Hotel in Brussels—The Editor to Giessen—Business—"Dining himself in"—Judges and Arbiters of Fate—Giessen Worthies—The German Police—Diplomacies—Kowtowing—Smarter Rooms—Furnished or Unfurnished?—The Fatal Decision.*

AND over there in Germany was Joseph Leopold pleading, moaning, his "languid, plangent tenor" inaudible to me by any wave transference, but working his feeling off in letters as only a poet can. He is hopeful and hopeless by turns. He is annoyed at the slowness of the Rechtsanwalt; he is dying just to run across to me and see how I am, which would of course be suicidal to his hopes. "John says, 'Wait, it will all be well.'" The typist he employs to copy out his awful pothooks and hangers, consequent on an attack of writer's cramp, twigs her employer's restlessness, so un-German, and says, "What do you want to go to London for? *Kiessen iss gut enoff!*" In the languid, plangent tenor, he informs her: "But it isn't, it isn't!" He is *triste*, *triste en vérité*, bored stiff, as we say now, going in the intervals of his desk for dull walks with the dull Johns, calling on dull professors in the college, going over now and then for gold to Jena to lecture dully on the Pre-Raphaelites, his forebears, to Dr. Schücking's eager pupils, "talking himself in" slowly with genius—and its far-flung reputation, penetrating into this *Fester Burg* of Germany of which he desires to be a citizen.

And, these trifling escapades apart, he is "pegging away at Mr. Sorrel in the deep silence that has fallen on me." He is not unhappy, only numb.

I had pressed for a description of 29 Nordanlage, and I got it. He had two rooms, the one giving on to the other. "In one is a table, a writing-desk, a sofa, five chairs, and about two hundred and fifty ornaments, ranging from bits of coral like human brains, to gilded busts of Lohengrin. In the other room is a bed, a table, a chest of drawers, cupboard, washstand, and two hundred and fifty more ornaments." He was on the ground floor; the entrance was very dark, but the rooms were light and airy; the house smelt always of onions; the landlady appeared to be a deaf mute, and had bad teeth. "The sanitary arrangements are those that so horrify you, but are at a good distance."

Opposite the window was a little strip of green, covered now with orange-coloured leaves from the chestnut tree. It was the fifth of October. "Many children play there all day, exploding percussion caps; from time to time they climb on to the railings, grin in at me as I sit writing, and exclaim, "*Tag! Engländer!*" Rooms and breakfast cost forty m. a month; lunch fifty pfg. (sixpence a day)."

I gathered he got up at eight-thirty, breakfasted at nine, and then walked along a strip of green, round the park, round the town to John's office to ask for letters, returning by ten-thirty and settling down to write, in dirt and discomfort; "the landlady informs me regularly that she did not expect me so soon and has not had time to sweep the room. At one she brings me a plate of soup, a plate of the beef the soup has been made from, and three pickled gherkins."

Mrs. Braun was no cook. When there was fish it was so bad that, not to hurt her pride, the author would put it in a drawer and forget it. His mother found these

proofs of good-feeling among his shirts when she came to stay there. And after this lunch of sorts: "I walk the streets till three-thirty, slumber till four-thirty, write till six, go to dinner in the town (Hotel Gross Herzog, souper 1.50), come home at nine, write till ten, play patience till eleven, and go to bed. So the genius (*Ich danke dir, Jude, da du mir das Wort gegeben hast!*) that England so inhospitably had exiled from her shores passes his eventful days. I write these words in German because last night I went to see *The Merchant of Venice*."

I never got a letter that was not shot with the agony of writer's cramp, which every doctor he had ever consulted told him was just a nervous symptom, aggravated by loneliness. "The pain is fairly intermittent. When I write legibly the pain is bad; when I don't take trouble, and write illegibly, nothing to speak of. I shall get along. I have been writing all the morning at this. One o'clock—Lo!—Mrs. Braun with soup . . . one-ten—soup eaten! . . . It is dreary, still weather with leaves falling everywhere. Mrs. Braun has brought some meat that looks like worsted. . . . Yes, I smoke cigars at 5 pfg. (a halfpenny)."

The army, later, cured the cramp. But here was a dreary state of things, and it should be ended as soon as possible. I had never seen John, and rather hoped I never should. But I was British enough to want a British opinion. I wrote off on my own account to Sir John Westlake, the eminent international lawyer and another of my father's old friends—how good they were to me, and how I tried them! Old John Westlake, as his Cornish tenants called him and his pony impartially, who adored Papa and Sir Charles Dilke, and would never believe any harm of the latter. He answered that he had lots of time in Cornwall, and would tell me anything I liked. I put the case to him. His answer, though hard and contradictory of certain ready

and fallacious assumptions of mine, was kindly and reassured me completely as to the main point, telling me plainly what rested with *me* to do.

I made up my mind to carry out faithfully his prescriptions as far as I could. They involved a good deal of grandmotherly legislation, and would irritate Joseph Leopold. He was so fundamentally careless of everything that did not concern literature. It was certain that he must not come to England to see me through my "little flutter," as I called my operation. I wrote and told him that it was going to be a very minor operation and that he must on no account worry about it.

And so it was—very minor. One afternoon Mary Martindale took me to a certain house in Minden Terrace—strange how Germany followed me even there!—and put me in the hands of a matron who, having read my books and conceiving of me, therefore, as *une femme forte*, was sensible enough to enter into a bargain with me. I was to be allowed one visitor every day, and only one, who could stay from three till six—two hours longer than the usual time. I on my side contracting to eat well and never have a temperature. I kept my word, and she kept hers. As far as getting up a temperature went I had no inclination to do so, although there was a constant coming and going in my room of jolly Irish nurses, coming one by one to see my French nightgowns, and although I was given pork for dinner the day after I had been "cut."

The stipulation as to the daily visitor arose from the fact that Fräulein Reiss, of "*Kiessen, gut enoff!*" could not succeed in keeping her employer's nose to his desk. He got the surreptitious telegram that his sister-in-law sent him about me the day before at ten o'clock, and, starting at midnight, was in London half an hour after the portals of the home had closed upon me. That evening, lonely, disconsolate, full of castor oil and little

else, I sat on my bed like a frightened performer before the play, when I was suddenly summoned to the 'phone downstairs, and, lifting the receiver, listened again to a voice not heard since two months ago on Cologne platform. I sent for the matron and made the bargain.

Next morning at seven they dressed me in what seemed to be a diver's suit, a shirt and leggings of wool up to my waist, and sent me down breakfastless to the waiting-room, furnished with a chair and a telephone, while my bedroom was being "done." I dared not use the telephone, though Joseph Leopold was at my mother's house, because he was there incognito. I waited there alone from seven till nine, when I was fetched back for the doctor (a Mrs., for a suffragette cannot call in anything else) to work her will on. My own room, when I was again led into it, seemed all white. There was no bed that I could see, but a linen-covered trestle—it looked like an ironing board—on which I was told to stretch myself. In passing I had noticed a table on which there lay a splendid array of knives. And then—blessed gas! I love it. And then—waking on my bed all right and seeing a nurse sitting with her back to me at the fire making herself an apron—and a cup of tea—and my maid with my letters—and Joseph Leopold to come at three! It was just eleven then. I was told not to wriggle much. Why should I? I felt no pain.

I was not alone more than one day, the day Joseph Leopold sneaked down to see his children in their convent for what, though he did not know it, was going to be the last time before he went out to fight in 1915. He was taking them the necklaces of amber I had threaded for them out of my big haul of twelve—not necklaces but neck-collars—that I had bought in a Marburg pawnshop, the deposit, I suppose, of needy Prussian peasant women gone poor under the Prussian régime.

I had some very nice letters, several from the friend

of Joseph Leopold, D. H. Lawrence, who wrote and said he was so sorry I should be "being played all out of tune like a badly handled violin." He wanted money to get married, and he sent me—actually in this connection—the MS. of two plays. Presently there came a third, "rather more raggy," which he had refrained at first from sending—"afraid it was too rowdy to send to a lady muffled up in a nursing-home!" It was *Mrs. Holroyd*.

Not at all. I wasn't ill. I was quite happy. Though my bed wasn't exactly a bed of roses, it was soft enough. This was the only "lie down" that I had ever submitted to. Taken all in all, those ten days were the happiest of my life. I corrected my own new book, covered my bed with MS. and papers, boxes and rolls, till the nurses squeaked with amusement every time they came in, and I read carefully what I had taken down when I was too ill to know what I was doing, namely *Ancient Lights*, just out, with a dedication, "To my Kids."

Shock number two out of that book!

Beauty did not write, but her mother did. Perhaps Beauty's strong sense of moderation came into play; I must not have too much at once, even of pleasure, for Goneril's letter was a letter of sympathy—stark, severe sympathy, but still sympathy.

In truth, as regards my sister, our love, which at one time amounted to a passion, died hard and subsisted for very long—languishing, moribund almost, but still there. I was aware of it in her letters to me; cropping up steadily every now and again, these showed tenderesses, allusions to our common past, sandwiched in between crude sternnesses that were embodied in parrot-like phrases showing the poor little mind diseased, infected with a virus, corroded with suggestions altogether foreign to her gentle, upright, unsubtle nature.

This queer *entente* between her and the woman she

was "lamming into" survived through recriminations, arraignings, and accusations and at the last, when the pencil strokes grew weak and spidery as if deprecating their significance—of peculation, fraud, and forgery even—through endless pages to where the inept production trailed off into the signature and helpless assurances of love. For she was no artist, not even an unconscious one. She was merely a pretty, uncommonly silly, vain, and temperamental woman, as good as gold but her mind lying prone and plastic under the drillings of intelligences superior to her own. They worried her. She did not find them soothing.

Our Aunt Jane was about on her mental level, and Goneril always sent her a goose at Christmas with garnishings of knitted woollies and so on. She slept a good deal, and preferred sitting to standing, and lying down to either. These days she generally lay on a sofa and made herself blouses beautifully. The last communication that she made me after we had ever so slightly come together, just before her death, was a picture-postcard bearing on one side the usual Christmas congratulations, and on the other a tank, ploughing along with its back up!

Joseph Leopold returned to Germany the day I left the nursing-home.

And then there followed the hideous proposition to go away for a change. That "change," always so same, so cold, so dull, and in the depths of winter, too! Eastbourne—the very name is chilly—or at best Bournemouth, or perhaps Ventnor. And alone. My mother's journeyings were done. I yearned for a place where Joseph Leopold could come and stay, meeting me half way, from Germany. . . . Abroad? That would be expensive, or seem expensive. Commend me to English spas for dearness!

The Belgian one! Just across the frontier from



GONERIL IN BED



Germany! I wrote to my godfather and enlisted his sympathies. He knew Aunt Jane. He had lately written to my mother and told her not to let me be "ploted"—alluding to the plucking process which prepares geese, and ducks too, for the table. He sent me fifty quid and his blessing if I would go from Spa to a place in the Ardennes called Laroche and buy him a ham of a pig fed on juniper—one of the specialities of this place. He enclosed an old label off a parcel which had once enwrapped such a dainty.

But I had a good deal to do before I could leave England. I had to get the editor out of No. 84; furniture and books to sort; an angry bank manager—whom Joseph Leopold had forgotten to warn that he was opening an account at another bank—to pacify; and my own affairs to attend to, that is to say, some harassing appearances before the Master in Lunacy, who, perhaps because he could not see, always seemed to my jaundiced eyes to insist on taking the wrong view. His nice wife happened to be a friend of the family's, but do you think he took any notice of that? Cæsar too was above suspicion. What so disagreeably affected me was the fact that he only heard voices and never saw faces, so that he never knew when a speech was left unfinished or whether one looked a decent, credible sort of person or no. That made it very difficult to behave, and no doubt he thought one wasn't behaving! One was so totally unused to the brass tacks of law as to expect drawing-room manners and social amenities—to be listened to when one was speaking and have one's sentences finished for one rather than submit to their being nipped in the bud all the time!

About a week before Christmas I got off to Spa, where an old colleague of the *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *World*, lived. Thérèse Descours was married to the principal doctor of the sad Queen of the wicked Leopold in her

retreat at Laeken. And Joseph Leopold from Giessen, where he kept his rooms, was there to meet me; he lodged at Alighans's, next door to the Guilleaumes.

And then there began a funny little life in this funny little, very old-fashioned *ville d'eau*, that does not even boast a Consul, whose inhabitants are so good that they have abolished the tables and live on the waters. There is one spring outside the Pouhon, where all the Spadois come with jugs to draw their drinking-water. In the mornings Joseph Leopold tried to teach me German, to improve my literary style, and wrote prefaces to my book, which Mr. Pawling unfailingly turned down, with the polite excuse that good wine needed no bush. Or Joseph Leopold played golf at Balmoral, the club high up in the snowy hills overhanging Spa, and I went up there to tea and ate *cramique*, the cake of the country. Now and then we made little journeys to Liège, where a surprisingly clever doctor lived. Or we took the train to Germany, where Joseph Leopold was supposed to be living. That is one of the ways he always managed to queer his own pitch.

On New Year's Eve the snow hung on the trees in a solid wall of white over the red roofs of Spa, and we all went over to supper at Alighans's, and Joseph Leopold made his famous punch. And when day dawned on what was to prove a year of bitter, continuous litigation, he fetched me early, and we took the train. At eleven o'clock on New Year's Day, 1911, he and I, kneeling painfully on the stones of the Cathedral at Aix la Chapelle, over the tomb of Charlemagne, in the company of other godly Germans, in the coloured darkness of the great rose window, smelling the bitter-sweet of the incense, heard Mass.

I was rapt . . . but Joseph Leopold, kneeling at my side—misliking his attitude, the cold stones, or suddenly appalled perhaps, by all this ceremonial: envisaging the

enormity of the task he had set himself—was in a sense unsympathetic to me. A cold, patient man, without fire, lazy of habit : his heart, dull-beating, was perhaps more faint about it all than he was willing to let it appear. It wasn't really his job, and he was up against clever, shrewd people who had spent all their lives at it and had not novels to write, but gained their living in a less nervous way. And I sometimes think that in disgust at the obvious disparity he took a sort of pride in sticking to—in putting all his wits into his own profession, and making the other his hobby. Just playing at law was a relaxation from the stern professional necessity of finding—let us call it—*les mots justes*, and plenty of them. The wild-cat schemes, absurd solutions of the insoluble, incredible lapses, quick changes, like the permutations of a shilling shocker, that this artist liked to put up ! He was determined to get—he could not help getting—the fierce ancestral colours—Brunonian madder red and vandyke brown—always into his plots, schemes, and books. For he was the grandson of the painter of “Parisina,” who, as a boy, lived in Brussels and near the Wiertz Museum, absorbing its horrors till he came to see all life, even still life, like matter in a rage—dipping his brush into a deep, strong, silent fount of colour, to which everything must be “brought up”—prone to fallacies and superstitions ; capable of generosities, obstinations, and long endurances. I notice this in the grandson's work—always the passions of his puppets are set forth with a reasonable, yet cloudy violence. His villains are as lazy in vice as his saints are active in piety—never “quite or'nery folk like you and me.” But Joseph Leopold condescended not to go into the mental processes of either you or of me. His habitual disregard of the mentality of others played their game.

Here is a letter from him to me : a bomb, the proposed casual treatment of great issues. “I should

rather like to suggest having one of the children over here for their holidays—but I don't quite see how to fit it in." I should think not, indeed! I wonder if he remembered the answer of a Prime Minister—a post which I pretty well occupied to him—to a potentate who proposed a little rectification of frontiers: "Only three kingdoms, sire."

A veil of pride and mental libertinage seemed to come over his eyes and made him—so knowledgeable—as blind as those that can't see. And simple! Anybody could "do" this sapient creature, whose vision strayed far beyond them and missed them. It reminded me of the "kidding" of the short-sighted Mr. Spooner that I used to observe in the streets of Oxford. The undergrads, out of bounds or peccant in some way, used to run the gauntlet fearlessly, nip past him as near as possible under his nose, and so escape "gating."

He told me with modest pride the story of the deer in the pen in the yard of the Grosser Herzog in Giessen, where he had stayed when he was looking for lodgings. The deer was being fattened for the table. It was in a twisted cage of boughs in the hotel grounds, where the children, passing, prodded it and poked it with sticks, and threw mock food to the wild and vulnerable creature that had nothing to do but lie down in its misery and hope to be killed and eaten soon.

Joseph Leopold bought him alive for two pounds ten, hired a cart, took him to the Hunnen, Grabe beyond the town, and let him bound away to the forest. But, when I came to Giessen, I went to see the place of this humane exploit, and a deer undergoing the same treatment was in the pen. . . .

Certainly, through this year at least, I lived like that deer, vulnerable, prodded at, shot at. . . . Arrows, barbed with curious and unwarranted knowledge, saved up from the days of the cradle, and tipped with rancour, fell

my way. The law of England, supported by orders, summonses, and petitions, lay heavy on us both. I wonder how many times we resorted to the Consul at Frankfort to sign this or that—he or I? Fate was very hard on him—first the Review, then the children. After that January of 1911 I do not think he ever smiled much again.

He had lost one of the things he had loved best in the whole of his life, his paper, and he was going to lose the children. He would continue to fork out something like two hundred a year for them, but no longer would he have the right to suggest its expenditure, dictate their little policies, sympathise with their little sorrows, make good certain nursery losses of credit, and so forth. His Aunt Emma's oft-repeated doctrine that the only way to keep his memory green in their minds was to "give them things" found an echo in his own, but when he was depressed he would admit that "it was a purely unreasonable desire to keep one's memory green, and not worth doing." But he jolly well tried to do it.

His duties seemed to have resolved themselves into that of paying. His payments were made with the greatest regularity, involving in many cases, a considerable amount of mental stress. For suddenly to get a bill with a long list of items addressed to you by a polite Mother Superior, who is more than your social equal, who appreciates you for what you are—a genius—and sends you her best Christmas wishes, but who wants to be settled with like any other creditor, only more so, coming into the middle of a jaunt to Braunfels or Wetzlar, which you open as you sit in a *Biergarten* with your glass of *Grosser Dunkles* on the table beside you, having walked miles through a trackless German forest, is sufficiently discrepant and upsetting. But—chalk it up to him!—it was paid always on the nail, big accounts and little

accounts, holiday funds, doctors' bills, clothes accounts, down to the smallest details of toothbrushes and hair-ribbons—cars, pony-traps . . . but that came later, and was the very devil !

His only consolation, and I rubbed it in as often as I could—if people would only rub in consolations as they rub in disagreeables!—that the children were being brought up in his own special religion, as expressly stipulated, was certainly present. He had been received into the Church himself when he was in Paris, a boy of eighteen. I think the charms of the Father who prepared him, and the picturesqueness of it all, were what appealed to the poet. He had the greatest dislike to the ugliness of Anglicanism—the inartistic compounding with the anomalies of the confused service, three in one, held in a building whence The Rood has been taken down by the immediate ancestors of those who are sitting there, in deadly opposition to their still earlier ancestors, those of the Old Faith, who have been butchered and gibbeted for it. The compromise of high churchiness, of which he had naturally seen a great deal, was his horror.

I was jealous of the children, for I was so often sacrificed to them. He thought it was the other way :

“ Chalk that up to me if I have been a bear lately.”

He wrote on a literary matter to D. H. Lawrence in what “ D. H.” called his new “ Jove-abdicated-in-disgust tone,” and afterwards commented on to me :

“ He is really such a lot better fellow than he thinks he ought to be, to belong to this shabby state of things, but he daubs his dove-grey kindness with a villainous selfish tar, and hops forth a very rook among rooks, but his eyes, after all, remain like the Shulamite's, dove's eyes.”

I shall always love D. H. Lawrence for that, though I never see him, and I think the worthiest action of Joseph

Leopold's life was recognition of his genius, and Lawrence's practical help of prompt publication which the editor of a review could give. He printed him in chunks, and "D. H." was charmingly grateful for *la moindre des choses*.

I made up my mind to go and beat up the Paris relations for myself. Emile Guilleaume, as well as being a doctor, could tell fortunes by the cards. The cards were against me ; still, we decided to go to Agnes Farley's in Paris for the week-end. Joseph Leopold wrote to his cousin and announced our arrival. Perhaps the letter was not tactful, for I saw one specimen of the correspondence when I got back. It ran :

"Be more correct in your expressions."

I went to see the rich banker in the Rue de Coq. He approved of *me*. But he was an ardent religionist, and built Catholic churches, and had married his daughter to the Duc de Tancarville, and wrote from the beautiful castle of that name on the Seine.

And while I was there my own poor heart was pierced. The Beauty went and married herself without telling me. It was not her fault. She did not mean to be unkind. She was "sweetly" religious, and had been forbidden by her earthly father to write to me. Well, well ! With tears in my eyes, so queerly unsuitable in Paris, where I think I have never in my life, anywhere, in any place, seen a French woman in such a state, I went and bought her a *porte bonheur* at Loucher's. It was civilly acknowledged one statutory week after the honeymoon. Brides are not supposed to attend to their purely social obligations until that period of grace has supervened.

Rose Le Quesne, the artist, took us to the Bal Bullier, where we watched the new dances, the Tango and the Fox-Trot and the Bunny Hug. And we went to the Moulin

de la Galette where, years ago, when I was living in Paris, Arnold Bennett and I used to sit by the hour at a little china table on iron legs, à l'écart of the dancers, sipping our *rhum St. James*, watching the hatless *midinettes* of the morning hours taking their soulful pleasure of the night. It was beautiful. Passionate, pale-faced, weary, dead-eyed, they hung like creepers, only their feet moving, on the shoulders of their partners, their *michés* of one evening perhaps! We would single out, Arnold Bennett and I, as they came round and round again past our table, the dancers who looked most utterly "gone." He serious, determined, a temporary rock of fidelity; she *pamée*, in her plain black dress and black hat of daily use, but delicately, sensibly shod always. Distinguished, all of them!

And Joseph Leopold went by himself to Les Ambassadeurs in the open air—and came home and wrote "All the Dead," about a vision he had had on the Hunnen Grabe, the Champs Elysées of Giessen, . . . the Germanic warriors rising, clasping to their iron breastplates the German maidens that have lain buried with them for the last thousands and thousands of years. That is the funny way poems come!

And we lunched with Arnold Bennett and his new wife in the Rue de Grenelle, and, cynically, as a great luxury, they treated us to an English leg of mutton and potatoes and greens.

And back to Emile Guilleaume's "I told you so!" The night after, in a car rolling along moonlit roads to Verviers Junction, where we parted, Joseph Leopold back to 29 Nordanlage, whose horrors, from his conversation, I already began dimly to envisage, and I to Calais—for England.

It was the night mail I took; I was too ill for the four-hour Ostend passage, which the Belgians obstinately, by fair means or foul, tried to make one use. As we

reached Brussels a look at my watch convinced me that I should not be allowed to "make the connection." I confided my anxiety to the carriageful of Belgians, who admitted it was hopeless, and that I should have to sleep in Brussels. A gentleman sitting opposite me, who had been profuse in civilities since Verviers, kept saying: "Let me . . . you must come to The Midi . . . it is the best . . ." I put him off politely; the ladies in the carriage seemed to think I should have considered myself lucky. . . . I hoped a *chasseur* from some one of the big hotels at Brussels would be meeting the train. But it was eleven o'clock, the lights were dim, and, as far as I could see, there was not a soul on the platform. The wretched man got out too, and would not leave me; he was insistent. Without answering him, my eyes played round the station until I detected a cap with some gold galon, and I rushed at it. Gold Galon said Hotel de Saxe—the very hotel that Aubrey Beardsley used to stay at and draw! I went with the *chasseur*, and the gentleman went in the other direction, saying indignantly over his shoulder, "I leave you to your fate." He meant the relative status of the hotel, which he imagined would appal me. It was not an hotel; it was a *buvette*—with bedrooms, or, perhaps, one bedroom. The room into which I was ushered, with its leering volutes and hideous bellyings of brown mahogany, intimately reminded me of a Beardsley drawing. Some yellow-white leno curtains hid from me the lights and delights of Brussels. A candlestick was handed to me—the electric light had failed. I had half a roll stuffed with ham in my bag. I ate it, not the candle, both equally unappetising, and then got into bed without a nightgown. The sheets were very cool and clean, but presently . . . a noise . . . a rustling. . . . Terrified, I was just going to rush out into the passage when I remembered that I had no dressing-gown. While I was putting on a few clothes a whitish cat came in through

the leno curtains and purred and made friends with me. I found a spot of whiskey in my flask, and slept like a log with the cat on the bed. It was like being at home. In the morning I wondered if my pound would run to a breakfast as well as my night's lodging? When I paid, however, with the tip for the *chasseur* who was going to take me to the station, there seemed enough for a *petit déjeuner*, with twopence over. Downstairs the woman of the house, who was washing the parquet, gave me something to eat—going on with her washing and moving my chair round and round so that it should not impede her ministrations. . . .

I contrived to send Joseph Leopold a line from Brussels to tell him what had happened. He just acknowledged it, and did not even enquire what sort of a night I had had.

At home it was what I had learned to call very *ungeheuer*—rather like a Grimm fairy-tale. My mother was stowed away in her own "apartments"; the servants were in the basement. I used to meet on the stairs one or other of my sisters coming to visit my mother, passing them in silence. Some iron did enter into my soul. But still it was very like an Ibsen or a Chekov play.

The only thing certain is—uncertainty. At least, I'm sure it may be so in Germany. The letters I got ran on permutations of mood. When the wheel was on the upturn it was a Paean; a Jeremiad it was after I had left him. Delays! Of course—what did he expect? And lawyers "fencing voluptuously with commas" in England and Germany both! Long inconclusive interviews with the authorities, "who keep on raising obstacles for the mere pleasure of doing so."

The number of excuses being put up "are simply immeasurable; why, it takes three months here to dispose of a pickpocket who, in your country, would be done with in a day." He was already a German subject, anyhow;

he had yet to become a citizen of the town of Giessen. Now they want proofs of his connection with this rich and honourable family whose name he bears. . . . "Will you send an old writing-case, reddish, Russian leather . . . with silver clasps? from Holland Park Avenue?" And all mixed up with allusions to the other preoccupation—Love! "It's tragic, it's absurd, it's ridiculous, but there it is!" . . . The Jamesian cadences smote my ear. I was astonished that the so faithful disciple did not insert "wonderfully" before the last word! Allusions to "stomachic uproar owing to Mrs. Braun's cooking," requests for "pants and vests" that were not forthcoming . . . collar measurements. . . . All this was antithesis—Browningesque—and I did not mind.

He was simply ineffably bored, and dying to be in London. My account of Gwen Otter's dinner of all *les névroses*, and of Frank Harris, my neighbour, sending away all Gwen's beautiful viands and preferring to munch dry biscuits out of a paper bag, which he crumbled all over the cloth and offered to me and H. G., who sat on my other hand, in his interesting fingers, seemed to make Joseph Leopold long to be there.

Why was I so calm, so pleased to be away from him? I answered that if my mother died I would go to him at once, and leave what he derisively called my home. I had no "equanimity," only a grim determination to second his efforts to acquire *pax Germanica*. I knew that complainings from me would bring him back in a moment, ruin him and the hope of that *pax*, and that hard work and sticking to it would mean money, and that, even for the things of the spirit, one must have money? And so my counsels to be civil to publishers, and not sit starving on a high horse while the foot-people picked up pennies.

He reassured me. Gloom had not quite stopped his productiveness. He was "shoving L.W.B.E. along good

and strong, and working double tides at the 'Rems.''' But he could hardly keep his eyes open, and there were leaden weights on all his limbs. It was bitterly cold—eight degrees of frost all day—and snow falling all the time. His future countrymen called it normal, and liked it. The atrocious prospect, the hideous rooms and uneatable cookery, the silence, and the rest of it—"things that seem funny when they are only temporary, but become portentous when they put on an aspect of permanence." Giessen was worse than Brixton, where at least I could go and see him once a week. But he would be strong; Giessen might kill him, but he would not give in. He would, with my leave, weigh on me with all the weight with which Giessen bore on him, and I must bear it. The change became so marked that even Mr. Lawrence inveighed against what he found in Joseph Leopold's letters—"the grin-and-bear-it, ironic attitude, which is just so much grin foisted off on folk, and no one thanks you!" and advised him, when afflicted, to "howl shamelessly to the ever-attentive heavens." And he did! I was more attentive than the firmament, I fancy.

He had to sit tight, for any day the Ministry might summon him.

There were, I made out, three parties to the matter. The Town Council, who did not like him, the State Ministry, that wanted him, the judicial side—*Landsgericht Amt*—neutral. The Ministerium ordered the Municipality to accept him, and the Municipality were engaged in offering objections. By Saturday, perhaps, when the matter came up for final revision—it was always final for the moment—they might accept him—and they might not! The Town Council had been "soundly wiggled by the State in the matter, and had now got their backs up. . . ."

And every now and again he admitted that he had

been extravagant and given Mrs. Braun and her revolutionary, revolting cookery a "miss," and had gone out and dined well at Hettler's or the Bahnhof. So, as the result of a decent meal, the liver was better, the mercurial disposition asserted itself. "The excellent John says there is every chance of the authorities recognising me soon . . . and if they don't I shall appeal to the Emperor. . . ." "John says the authorities have already favourably reported me to the Grand Duke—the man we met in Nauheim. He's at Darmstadt, where he plays the democratic potentate who walks about and drinks beer with his subjects. I may have to go to Darmstadt. . . ."

He worked like a nigger at calling on these people who liked him ; "They would *fêter* me if I allowed it." There is the terrible doctor of philology who drives him mad with Grimm's Law and mediæval roots ; there is old Salzmann, "who fastens on me like a leech," there are students' parties at a Professor's which will kill him. And dinners with the Rechtsanwalt and his wife, "amiable, but too busy to be any good socially—tired, nervous, over-worked people both."

This nervousness he considered to be a decided feature of German mentality at that time when all Germany was not so much planning a French invasion as dreading a "try on" for the recovery of the lost provinces, that fetish which, as my mother said, "stood between the French and their wits." A sense of imminence, procuring the usual nerves and dyspepsia. These people were martyrs to it. John was, witness his red, bumped-out cheeks, his shiny, tight forehead, his breathlessness, his little punctuating groans. It is the national curse. And they work off some of its minor immediate effects every year with regularity, spending a month in some Kur or other as a matter of course, for business, not pleasure.

They do not, as we English do for fun, disobey the

orders of their Geheimrath. Fun! There is no fun in Germany, only *Simplicissimus*, the *Punch* of this nation, quite unintroduceable—so different from our advertised little gentleman—into the drawing-room, or even the home. It lies on the tables at Markese's in Marburg and such little restaurants, where the men go to drink tea and coffee in glasses after dinner. The Kaiser in its pages permits himself to be foully abused and made a cockshy of under the crust of coarseness. He is wise—or was wise. It acted, I suppose as a *détente* for his loving and patient people.

As for the Judge in his forthcoming cause, Joseph Leopold had him well in hand; gave him an English lesson once a week, rubbing in the idea during the rests that he sincerely desired to be an inhabitant of his horrid town—which he did not, exactly—and perhaps that was why the gentleman seemed, as Joseph Leopold admitted, slightly sceptical of his desire. Such a thing the formal German official had never heard of in a Briton before, the reverse being so steadily the rule. So he is not much flattered at the earnestness of Joseph Leopold to become his fellow-townsmen, for he thinks there must be a catch in it! Giessen is "*gut enoff*," but hardly pleasant. And Joseph Leopold, unable to present it with a new pump or a new town hall or a new barracks, is conscious that it is up to him to persuade them that he is just a quiet, unthinking, *bon vivant*, frequenting the officers' mess, fairly prosperous (as they have an eye to taxes), throwing money—not too madly—about, and, installing one of the actresses as his *maîtresse en titre*, managing to appear "politically undangerous."

That was the rub. Socialism! Germany's bugbear and menace, the staff of Junkerdom! He knew that if they were to discover in him the slightest trace of that virus all was up. But they would not, of course. The

Police knew all there was to know, and they could not be taken in. The Police was the reason why I was told so little, it was their spying that, said Joseph Leopold, so "limited his powers of expression," for he was a shy man. Apart from sentiment, I kept asking him for sensible letters, *sensible* three times underlined. I found out when he came to England in May, and not till then, the nature of one of the obstacles he spoke of. They wanted an undertaking from him that, when he was adopted as a citizen, he would live actually in the town of Giessen.

*Jamais de la vie!* He had thought and talked of a villa on the Rhine, near Aunt Emma—a villa that could be let for the summer, and where money, that Germans adore, would be his for the asking and a little deference and kowtowing to an ancient and influential relative. Once admitted to civic privileges, he would keep his promise to Aunt Emma and take up the family title, now in abeyance, and recover the large entailed estates in Prussia that were his by inheritance—near the Lüneburger Heide—where there is the ghost story. . . .

The desire for money! A good fence for the German relations, but really peace. Peace! I wanted it. I wanted, the moment my mother died, to get out of the country that held the Beauty, turned unkind, Goneril and Regan, not to speak of others uncongenial and disagreeable to me. Marwood wanted him to get a foreign correspondentship in Paris. He knew four languages. And, if it could not be Paris, a house at Aix-la-Chapelle, or at Montjoie, that fantastic little *opera-bouffe* village just across the border, or Malmédy whence he could run over and see the Guilleaumes. All the smart Spadois had villas in Germany. All the Germans who did business in Belgium—and there are hundreds of them—had town houses in Verviers or Pepinster or on the wooded heights of Spa; little red-brick villas that you can see for miles, like Wendy's house in the woods.

We had both taken London *en grippe*, but in my heart of hearts I knew it *would* be London in the end—at any rate, London for six months of the year. Joseph Leopold had the social instinct so thoroughly developed. He was no “sticker”—alas!

And then the question of *impressing* assumed enormous proportions, and he was getting ill, dying, down there in the marsh where the storks flew about and nested on unsanitary roofs. He *must* get up on the hill where the University buildings are. It looked so bad for the Judge to call on him and find him living in a pigstye, with a passage smelling of drains, and having to go through the bedroom to get to the sitting-room. Here was he, trying to impress this man with his eminence, and the man replies. “Why, then, is he living in a room that a poor student wouldn’t think of?” What Joseph Leopold wanted was a place where he could exhibit some possessions of his own, not the landlady’s, and have a table on which to put a dinner, ordered in—plates and spoons and all—from an hotel, “the way every bachelor in Giessen lives who is above the rank of a student.”

“Just consider what an odd figure a German similarly situated would make in England, where they gossip as they do here! All John can say in my defence is that I am eccentric, and I daresay that is true enough, but it won’t do. The police here enquire into every stick of furniture in the house, and all is registered in the central office for the authorities to consult when they want to.”

He would add:

“And *you*—you are one of those wonderful people, so Mrs. Prothero says, that can actually *see* what you don’t *want* to see! Can’t you see this? Or is it one of your crises of irresistible instinct that it would be cruel of me to override?”

No, only I “knew my Pappenheimer.”

The flat, he said, must be Unfurnished. He could

have furniture for £100, the seller taking it back at the end of the year for £80. He had seen a flat—the police had found out he wanted one—damned impertinent German police!—for £20. He was already paying Mrs. Braun £26 a year, a shilling a day for coal and light. . . .

What I was afraid of was, precisely, Unfurnished rooms. I up and begged him in a letter to take a Furnished flat, even scantily furnished, and we could supplement it. No! He might as well give up what John wanted him to do at once. He had spent a precious week in making enquiries. . . . "What am I to do? *What?*" Why had I taken the responsibility of keeping him alive? Having done so, I must now persevere and repair my crossing of the terrible finality of his arrangements a year ago. He supposed I wanted to break his spirit? Oh, yes, I was breaking his spirit all right by my crushing and convincing *exposé* of ways and means; the only argument that a person of his philosophy could oppose was this, that while one is gathering the ways and garnering the means one is spending the good years, and he'd leave it till he heard from me again.

I am afraid I paltered with the issue—it was perhaps far more serious than I thought. This prying of the German police that he was dinning into me was perhaps to blame. And perhaps I shall be arraigned before the Bar of the Heavenly Academy of Letters for thus preaching down with a horde of little maxims the heart of one of its most hopeful members.

I could not hear the languid, plangent tenor over the water, but I am sure that its tones would have frayed my heart's strings to tatters.

"Do, for heaven's sake, wire what you *honestly want*. This sort of thing is getting too distracting. I *must* arrange by Monday week. . . ."

I sent a long, costly telegram to the effect that he must take a flat—furnished or unfurnished, as he thought

proper. And why did he defer to my opinion so? How could I *honestly want* anything? I knew nothing but what he told me; I could not judge.

"I *honestly* just want you to do what you can that will get the German citizenship. I certainly thought at first that that would come automatically after five months' domicile—is that the right word? You see how uninstructed I am and how easily I can muddle you and myself. Take no more notice of anything I write of a carping or enquiring nature. This is really final, for, when I don't know what I am talking about, I am no good. Brush my opinion aside; you are the man on the spot. What did the woman say last year at Fleckhardt's Höhe? Don't be *unter den Pantoffel*! Nobody wants you to be."

And this astonishing man wrote next day:

"Of course, since it upsets you, I must give up the idea of unfurnished rooms. You don't appreciate how important it is!"

And the next letter:

"Have practically settled to take furnished rooms again, kept by a waiter who was for three years at the Criterion, and understands the better what one's needs are. So let your spirit be at rest. . . . It wasn't a frivolous device for spending money . . . but, of course, you will not be able to see that and will always be in panics over the idea of expenditure."

Expostulations! And the reply:

"Of course you shall have your way about everything. You always do, you know."

More expostulations! And:

"Darling, I have taken furnished rooms, so that's over. You do bedevil me so."

*Second Year of Exile—More favourable attitude of the Authorities—Joseph Leopold as usual sanguine—My visit to Giessen—Joseph Leopold's mother as chaperon and housekeeper—No Storks—The Johns, first impressions—He and She and the Tertium Quid—Captain Walloth and The Harem Skirt—My Distrust—Joseph Leopold's Confidence—German veneration of Wilde and Galsworthy—I feed it—Giessen Society's Reception of me—Paying Calls in German—"Dumb Crambo" ditto—Visit of the Johns to England—Business and Pleasure—The Coronation and Mr. Lloyd George—The Germans and Mr. W. J. Locke—His Great Dane and my Bulldog—Mr. W. H. Hudson, Mr. Bernard Shaw and my Owl—Return of Joseph Leopold to Exile—Too Frivolous for the Germans—Neglecting the Main Object—The Children again—Good News at last—Too Casual Intimation—Insist on Formal Assurance—Get it—The Johns sinister—War Rumours—Threatened Railway Strike—To Paris all the same—Congratulatory Letters from Mrs. Ward and Conrad—Plans—A House—A Grave on the Schiffberg—Henry James on Mr. Guggenheim—Gare de l'Est and the Rainbow over Rheims.*

By March he had moved and was getting in. He was sitting on the balcony in the sun. He was rushing his book through at a tremendous rate. The German papers were full of a book called *Ancient Lights*. Mimi had sent him the Coblentzer one, hailing him as the Prodigal Son who is about to re-enter the Fatherland. The funny thing was that the father was the prodigal, old Franz Hüffer, who shook off the dust of Germany, so odious to his artistic and enlightened mind, as long ago as the seventies.

And then we took a holiday in England and went down to Inchmery to stay with Lady De La Warr, where he played bridge all night till ten with my lady and her daughter and a nice Catholic priest. Poor Father Consett had always to get up and leave the game at ten sharp—some obscure rule common to the religion of three of the party. And then, after a good chunk of the season's

joys, Joseph Leopold took his mother back to Giessen.

The authorities were, I understand, much impressed by his move. The handsome flat, his mother there to give it the semblance of a general home, paying calls for him, trotting about with little Mrs. John ; and, in about a month, I was invited over.

I had bought a harem skirt. Those dictators of fashion, the buyers, were attempting to *lancer* this charming and sensible garment. I for one wish they had succeeded. He wrote :

“ It will be good business if you bring the harem skirt ; the whole town is agog about this new fashion, I find, and I will ask some local swells in to tea to see you in it. Bring Chandler. He'd be no use, but I'd love to show him the exquisite Bahnhof Restaurant here and what caterers can do.”

Of course I didn't bring Chandler, though he would have enjoyed it.

Giessen is a junction, a very smart junction, decorated *art nouveau*, like the rest of Germany. The roof is frescoed with wild flowers, and electric lights, in the form of campanulas, are hung in elegant festoons on long, thin, metal cords like organ pipes. The sandwiches like dreams and the beer *like* beer—and that is saying a good deal !

Joseph Leopold's flat was on the first floor and newly built—scaffolding poles still about it. It looked very imposing, and no place for storks. His man, a waiter at the Bahnhof, and his wife, lived in. She cooked and Rabich valeted Joseph Leopold. They slept on a bed in the kitchen—a monstrous one, their own, like one of those beds that James I or Mary Queen of Scots slept in, boasted by nearly every historical mansion. We were to have our meals there, but the mother of Joseph Leopold had given up her pleasant room in the flat in order to come and chaperon me in the Hotel Prinz

Heinrich. She took a stern view of her duties ; I don't think that Easter I was alone with Joseph Leopold for more than ten minutes.

It was a perfect rush of gaiety. Everyone called : professors and their wives, doctors and their wives, the military especially, and the *Chef de Gare*, who was a captain as well—useful “ touch ” this, thus to put the Army at the head of the Transport ! Captain Walloth, who came o' mornings and made his white *Schimmel* curvet for my delectation under the windows, was one of your strong, silent, fat men. I don't think I ever heard him say much more than “ *Wie geht's Ihnen ?* ” and another phrase. . . . For, next day, wearing my harem skirt, we went to the Johns ; not a real call—calls are paid in the morning—but to tea in a friendly way. Captain Walloth was coming on purpose to see it—the Herr Rechtsanwalt was going to steal a few moments from his work. . . .

Skirts were already so tight this year that it seemed rather absurd to make such a fuss about a woman's putting each leg in a separate trouser, as it were, when she was ordinarily and every day putting both legs into one. Indeed, in my nice new dress, as I went up Frau John's easy, broad-stepped, oak staircase, I walked with a sense of freedom very un-German-fraulike, and entered the drawing-room where I was to be the guest of honour—I and my *hosen rock*. . . .

There were large saddlebag chairs, and little tables bearing the novels of John Galsworthy and H. G. Wells, and on the wall, plates, and on the mantel, peacock's feathers in the style recommended by Wilde. These German people venerate his memory. When Dr. Schücking last year learned that I as nearly as possible escaped the honour of being Mrs. Wilde, he treated me with added respect.

Tea—stout tea—was spread in the dining-room. Everyone was thinking of my dress. The Herr

Rechtsanwalt had come home earlier to see it. Captain Walloth sat beside me, murmuring in a soft, luscious, yet raucous whisper, "*Hosen rock!*" Frau John said she should not have known it was bifurcated if she had not been told. Herr John was silent . . . he already saw the police on my track, requesting me to desist from giving the natives of Giessen food for reflection and animadversion. And so they did—next day.

I did not take to the Herr Rechtsanwalt. Was he going to be the devil of the piece? He was too like Napoleon to be quite good. A sensitive, intelligent mouth . . . a fine head, yet he looked *schlim* . . . and though his bill with regard to Bamberger, the "church-chest-cheat" of Marburg, on whom I had employed him last year, was low, that might have been a sprat to catch a herring. At any rate, the large English herring was now completely in his hands to make or mar. In the light of events I do not see any cause to reverse my first impression. He did not speak a word of English. His wife—well, she was charming, but her "slimness," in the slang sense of the word, jumped to the eyes. She looked frivolous, and was deep. I wondered what that bosom, covered with blue serge worked in hieratical designs, hid of scheming and some racial malice? She was an uncommonly clever woman, was Linchen, and against all women as a matter of course! Nothing of the suffragette about her! And she held her husband, Captain Walloth and contemplated, doubtless, holding also Joseph Leopold in the hollow of her little undistinguished hand. Joseph Leopold liked and trusted them both. . . . His mother was less penetrated with their virtues; she had had a German husband.

And then they came to dinner at 15 Friedrichstrasse the Johns and Captain Walloth and a couple of Herren Professors and their wives, and we played "Dumb Crambo"—and I did, too, in German! Intimations of my

German nursery past helped me; I had ever so little the power of arranging sentences, and was not much worried by the verb to be conveyed to the end of a very long one. And next day people began to call. I keep some cards—*Wirkliche Geheimer Regierungs Rath* and a *Geborene Freifrau von O. . . .* Joseph's mother and I duly returned calls and accepted dinners. Successful dinners last till four in the morning, and there is a continual coming and going between the dining-room and the *salon* till then. The last stage is beer. Beer in the small hours! There are also invitations to "Roulette and *Bowle*." *Bowle* is a very nice strong mixture of spices and Rhine wine that would put anyone not to the manner born under the table—and one night put Herr John. He was bothered. They played high—Joseph Leopold had a martingale—and Linchen did not at all like her man to lose money to his client. I enjoyed it. It was the other way sometimes, and then I didn't. In the day, walks, excursions to the Hunnen Graben and the Schiffberg, and many a *Biergarten*, along with the streaming populations getting out of the town on Sundays and holidays.

And then it was time for me to go home. But it was not good-bye. They were, Herr Walloth and all, coming to England next month to combine business with pleasure, see Marwood and Mary, Mr. Chandler, and the King of England crowned.

All this time I was being told, like Bluebeard's wife, not to go queering any pitches by the exhibition of unfeminine curiosity. I must on no account pump Herr John, or ask him how the naturalisation was going on. How could I have? "Dumb Crambo" was all very well, but a legal term would have been utterly beyond my German.

The visit to England was fatal to poor Herr Walloth's peace of mind, thinned him considerably, and made

him rather spiteful. English cookery and love ! I could not, of course, put them up. My house was like a beleaguered city, full of *consignes* and stipulations. Goneril was averse to meeting me or Joseph Leopold when she came to see my mother, and at last got her lawyer to arrange that we should remain sealed in an inner room till her progress up the stairs had been accomplished. She would announce her visits, like Royalty. But Mary Martindale, alone in the flat, since Joseph's mother had remained at Giessen at her priestly task of impressing the authorities, came to our assistance and took the Germans in. Herr Walloth, large, gay dog, took a room at The Russell, but daily hung about the flat or about my house where Mary was, murmuring, "*Wie gehts Ihnen !*;" in luscious tones that reminded me of Giessen. They all dined with me once or twice to meet English people. I forget who. May, I think, and Mr. Hudson and Dr. Westlake. Linchen possessed no evening toilette, and I offered to lend her one. She insisted on *buying it*—a ten guinea gown for two pounds ten—and I soon saw why. She had "*roofed it in.*" A modest German Frau does not unveil except in the harem.

They saw the Coronation. Mary took them to Windsor and I took them to Oxford. Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Locke, in their bungalow at Cholsey, offered the Germans hospitality, and we took my bulldog, full of poison, though we knew it not. A week ago he had bitten the milkman, who had retaliated on the dog by a dollop of meat saturated with red lead. I had been a little afraid of Mr. Locke's very Great Dane, but Roy was too languid to close with him, and lay all the afternoon on a rug on the lawn while we went on to Oxford. He died next day.

And before the Germans left we took a car and showed them English country. And, while I and Mary went to see Conrad, Joseph Leopold and Herr John went to see Mr. Marwood at Stowting, who was then really too ill

to see anyone, but stretched a point to oblige Joseph Leopold. Marwood spoke German—any language indeed. And the Johns, having sat with me in Sir Henry Synge's stand in Whitehall, and having seen me and Joseph Leopold walking about in the vast-looking space formed by the street cleared for the Royal carriages, standing cheek by jowl with my old friend Mr. Lloyd George, who talked to me pleasantly, though I verily believe he thought I was someone else, as these Big Wigs will, returned to Germany, well pleased with their entertainment, and their minds properly full of the importance of Joseph Leopold in the sorry scheme of things. Herr Walloth was pleased, too, because, though Mary would have none of him, she went back to Germany with the Johns and he would see her every day.

Roy had died, and now Ann Veronica went. Mr. Hudson was deeply distressed about her, and meeting Mr. Bernard Shaw coming back from Hampstead, so distraught was I that I tried to engage his sympathies, chattering through the rattle of the noisiest part of the Tube. I did engage them, I thought; he listened to my lament in the kindest way in the world. I had carried Ann Veronica about all day like a baby in my two hands, and, after she died, had an autopsy made, and found the bone sticking in her gullet. She had not eaten for days. No, there were no white splashes on the floor of the cage. . . . "Died of exhaustion," I understood Mr. Shaw to say as he went off to the discussion of something else that interested him, i.e., German Divorce Law. I judged that a new problem play was on the *tapis*.

So like Bernard Shaw's contrariness, for Germany and things German were not precisely in good odour just then, and, indeed, every perceptible odour in the world was vile! We were in for a hot July—it was the year  
My

1911, when heat and drought drove men mad, caused the cattle that supported them to be lean and perish, filled the Courts with murder and rapine, inflamed Strike committees, and incensed three nations to the verge of war for want of a little rain that might have stanchd their hissing hatreds.

One evening, as I sat in the little garden at Brook Green with the sister of Joseph Leopold, a man called Springfield who did odd jobs for her, came running along the railings on the green, to us, sitting under the one black tree with the pale gas-lamp behind, and with every sign of perturbation repeated a message from Mrs. Hyndman to her husband, both political characters. It was that all the German waiters in London, armed to the teeth, were massing in the big hotels, refusing to wash dishes, but ready to attack under their colonels, acting under sealed orders these long years past. Waiters, of course, are all conscripts. . . . We went on sitting there. Dr. Soskice, perhaps, knew his Pappenheimer.

But we women, in that dusk hour of helpless surmise, sitting in a backwater of Hammersmith, did not consider the message so very wild. Mr. Hyndman might or might not be elfishly attempting to *poser un lapin* to his old friend. These people who, through political intelligences connected with their own businesses, were "in the know," knew that a crisis, "dark and damnable"—as George Wyndham said, who also was in the know—was brewing, and that War, engineered in Chancelleries, might easily break out in the Pantry. In 1908 we were very near war. In 1910 eighty-four thousand conscripts were quartered in Trier, a frontier town. What about Prince von Bülow's article, which Joseph Leopold translated, and which appeared, I think, in the *Morning Post* long before I thought of him? And what about Metternich, Joseph Leopold's friend, staying at Wynyard

in that year, along with the editor of *The Times*, my friend, and the obvious sort of a crisis that was on then, when the Prince chartered a motor during the dinner-hour, to the great annoyance of Lady Londonderry, and was driven to Darlington to catch a train south? Already then the Germans were making mischief in Morocco and Bulgaria, and telling the transparent lies which are such a feature of German diplomacy and futility at home and abroad. I have never found a German lie hold water.

But, anyhow, there was no mention in the papers next day of anything of the sort.

I was still ill, worn, carped at, criticised, hopelessly overdrawn on my mother's behalf, trying to fill up the deficit with my own earnings. And Joseph Leopold would not let me do journalism—an aristocratic prejudice of the future Count von Aschendorf. And he was not minding *his* job. The two poets—his lightsome secretary Ezra and he—seemed to be spending their time in rushing about the duchy that he desired to adopt him, and other duchies, in cars. . . . At Homburg and Nauheim, where a great charmer was . . . escorting her sister to specialists, being very kind, and enjoying himself hugely.

And he had talked to me so much of the importance of convincing Authorities, of the necessity of being there, *très rangé*, sitting good and proper in his drawing-room when burgomasters called! When—*when* was the naturalisation going to get itself made? Surely skylarking about the Duchy was a mark of frivolity that would disgust Their Profundities?

It *sounded* jealous—alas!

And then the other, perhaps less reasonable, jealousy became a factor in the situation. I came up against the Children. There was a good deal to excuse me. Joseph Leopold was ordered riding exercise by the doctor, and

denied himself for the sake of the expense. My novel was returned from America—nothing doing! And there was a bill of his falling due for payment in August. *Ach du lieber Augustin. Alles ist hin! Geld* certainly seemed to be *hin*, and there suddenly came the cool request for a pony and trap for the children to go to church in during the holidays. That set the match to me. It was the last straw. Gently but firmly—the horrid, usual way of The Stinge with a strong sense of past generousities—I wrote and desired him to say that he really could not afford it—these holidays, at any rate.

The deluge of words that followed, of cruel felicities of speech, apt verbal lunges—*le mot juste*, indeed, applied to a palpitating, shrinking Mentor at home! I wrote—not said; there was the rub—fiercely that I didn't hate the children or their existence, but that I had a certain tendency to put him—or even myself—first, and could not think of their *menus plaisirs* till he was out of this nerve-racking wood. And I did so, of my nature, hate insolvency, even temporary:

“It is just the chance of my Victorian upbringing and its attendant fetiches. You jolly Ancient Lighters lived and wallowed quite happily in debt. My mother walked miles to save a twopenny 'bus fare so as to be able to afford the very best blankets. I have never been in debt in my life, or known anybody who was. When I was a child, two pawn-tickets fell out of the pocket of a coat left in the hall by Theo Marzials, and the maid brought them in on a plate to my mother as if she scorned to touch them. The idea of debt stands at my bedside like a spectre. I am upset even now at my mother's account being unavoidably overdrawn. You seem able to bear the sense of debt; the place in which the shoe pinches you is where it curbs your public generosity.

" . . . Yes, I do often think of the injury to the children of being deprived of a father's care, but I don't feel as if a treat here and there or a pony-cart is any compensation. I scorn your Aunt Emma's panacea for forgetfulness of you—if they do forget. Bless me, they're always writing to you !

" . . . Yes, I am fierce, and fierce enough to go on being called stingy. Think ! Really to-day I gave half a crown to a poor, crocky mother selling matches at a street corner with a baby unweaned in her arms. Chalk that up to me ! "

I would not write—for a space at least. And then came pathetic reminders of exile that vanquished my pert and absurd resistance. One overwhelmed me :

" What ever you do or don't say or keep silent about, don't, *don't* Not Write. For there are cruelties and refinements of cruelties, but, however cruel you are to me in words, I would rather have it than silence. For you must remember, you must believe, that whatever you are or you aren't, you are the only link I have with the visible world."

So on and so on, the voice of the charmer, and I veritably believe that the charm displayed, so far as I am concerned, was what the vulgar call " the gift of the gab," and the intelligent—" style." That useful trick of style at the service of all communications, verbal or otherwise, from one soul to another. The cunning use of inflections when the subject to be influenced is at hand ; in absence, the perfectly balanced sentence, the due pathos, the almost biblical English, the note well struck, with leisurely pauses suggesting deep-lying, sub-penetrative emotion, do as well.

Of course, I didn't *Not Write*. I broke the embargo. He was childishly glad of it ; love of me, some of the joy of the artist in the *truc* cleverly brought off. . . . He

had told me so plainly that what I had done was unforgettable and unforgivable, and now, to soothe me, he observed amiably that he had forgotten and forgiven. So, from me :

“ If my silence makes you wretched—well, I’ll write, and for God’s sake don’t tell me that I am the noblest woman in the world. And don’t be ‘resigned,’ please ! Do you think your phrase, ‘It’s the will of God !’ comforts me much ? . . . It is all right for you ; you are clever enough not to worry about these things. . . .”

He didn’t, or he wouldn’t, show it. The meagre sentence in *Ancient Lights*, his casual reference to my awful night in Brussels, his theory that when he came to England it wasn’t to see me but ‘to walk my dog,’ his determined ellipsis of emotional phrases that he used to attempt to put down to official prying which was “limiting to his powers of expression !” And when he didn’t write fulsomely about my health it was because, forsooth, with a sort of artistic prudery, he “disliked writing the obvious.”

So when I got two letters with news that to me was like the coming out of chloroform to find the tooth out and in the waste-paper basket, I kept very calm, and considered ways and means.

“ John seems to think it is all right now about the naturalisation—though of course they may take it back if I don’t sit tight enough here to show them I am stable, or my pass-book doesn’t look opulent.” And later, “ John says it is absolutely certain now. Isn’t it jolly ? ”

Jolly, yes ; but I insisted on quite a formal statement from him, and got it.

A railway strike was threatened. The men were to go

out at eight o'clock. Their temper was bad. The man who sold him ice, Chandler said, and chopped it, had a revolver in the other hand. Chandler was very down generally. He was a bit of a speculator, and had lost a thousand pounds in the New Gallery fiasco. He adored Joseph Leopold, and was deeply disappointed at not having gone to Germany, for he would have liked the jaunt. But he was my very good friend, and said that we should not want for food so long as he had a shop. The temporary nurse I had for my mother departing could not get her box through the strikers, and had to leave it at Paddington and go home with only her handbag. How about mine to Dover? I could not go on this errand without some clothes to my back. I wrote that I must defer it, that if the men *did* go out on Thursday the whole thing, short of civil war, would be settled in a week. I had great faith in my Mr. Askwith—the strike-settler. But, if it wasn't really over, how could I leave the little principality where I reigned? Awful things might happen any minute . . . there was a chance of famine.

My mother's doctor thought me so ill with heat and dust that he was dying to get me off, and suggested I should go to the Farleys in the Rue de la Paix, where I should be near enough to be telegraphed for, and could take cars. Nurse Heffer, the prude, the easily shocked, was conscientious, and the only danger for the invalid was want of food. All she got now was milk and eggs, and she could be kept up on tea if need be. There was the good Chandler. I could not procure milk for her, and, as I ate meat, I was by way of being a useless mouth. Things would grow dearer. And I was much weakened by poor nourishment, water and vegetables failing . . . streets unswept and unwholesome dust flying . . . these things did not affect the invalid in her suite of apartments.

But how if it was mob rule over here? Chandler said that it was going to be awful. The doctor said

that I should be no good if it *was* awful, by which he supposed that I and Chandler meant an attack by the massed forces of Socialism, and I was more likely to be a mark for frenzy than an old invalid lady.

It was just eight days to the twentieth. I settled to go then, telling Joseph Leopold to await me in Paris and begin letting Farley take all his teeth out.

I got off all right on the twentieth, though I was so ill I could hardly stand, bearing two lovely letters of encouragement from those doyens of my profession, Mrs. Humphry Ward and Mr. Joseph Conrad, which were worth their weight in gold to me at this juncture. Mary A. Ward to "Dear Child." Her "regard for my father's daughter"! Conrad, dilating politely as he only knew how upon my "services to literature" in the person of his friend and the need of peace, with a capital letter for that friend. And, best of all ghostly comfort, his own letter in my pocket. Germany had accepted him, was glad of him; the burgomasters of the smug town of Giessen, in Hesse Darmstadt, were in a fair way to hang out flags for him. Schücking, his old friend at Jena, where he went to lecture now and then, had written to congratulate him and Germany. I remembered Schücking when he stayed with me at South Lodge, and how he never used his knife, but laid it on the side of his plate and worked away with his fork, as it were the flat of his sword, on his slices of cold sirloin. There had been a big dinner at Hettler's and much wine had flown. . . . Joseph Leopold speaking with his own grim effect of world-resignation—"It's the Will of God!"—a favourite exclamation out of *The Playboy*—complained that, on this wild occasion, only the Johns were silent, dour as usual, conscientiously plugging away at their dinners. . . . Perhaps the German pitfall was digged even then?

But the attitude of these good people did not seem to matter so much now. The point was that of Giessen.

It, apparently, was acclamation. Dear, kind Giessen ! Perhaps, he suggested, I might after all be thinking of giving them a new pump ? We would live there at first, and then, perhaps, a castle on the Rhine for next year, when poor mamma. . . . We would have no more to do with England, which had so plagued him for the last three or four years, neither of us. England had now no particular jurisdiction over him. All the law he ever wanted again—and he hoped he wouldn't want any more—he would go to Germany for. They were slow, but so sure and so cheap. If he had a child it should be christened in Germany, at Giessen for choice—not Justus Christ, though, like the local chemist where I used to go to get my prescriptions made up. And he would be buried—oh, on the hill of the Schiffberg, in the chapel there. The inn at the Schiffberg where we were going, with the real green boughs trained in wavy lines on the whitewashed walls of the Saal, freshly cut every week till it looked like a Morris wallpaper—the Evenlode. I thought with a grim humour, which never deserts me even if I would, of the famous envelope in my mother's safe at home labelled " Our Grave." What about a plot to be taken, somewhere near the Hunnen Graben, along with the queer Hunnish dead that he had written about in the poem, instead of the slavish populations of Woking ? He had just seen a Senegalese actress in an open-air kiosk in the Champs Elysées who had suggested the "rice-pale queen" in his poem, and I was nearly as pale through worry and waiting, though I did not eat rice ! So and so much he wrote.

At the Gare du Nord he met me, toothless and feckless, and attempted to see me through the Customs. He had not a grinder in his head, and was still, perhaps for this reason, a little "limited in expression." Farley was putting him in crowns at eight pounds a head ; it seemed to me that he could have inserted diamonds

at that rate, as he used to do for Australian millionaires—a safe way to carry them about and get them through the Customs. He was a trick dentist, famous for his athletic stunts. It was said that he could take a tooth out of your head and put it back again the wrong way up. He was very appreciative of me, considering me “a unit of some value,” and joyously covered four of my perfectly good teeth with gold crowns that another dentist, ten years afterwards, has been kind enough to yank off. Naturally, millionaires were his happy hunting ground. The loss of the *Titanic* docked him of a thousand a year through those good clients Messrs. Guggenheim & Müller. “Served Gug right,” Henry James said, for travelling in a walking *ville d’eau*, that only wanted one more attraction—a golf course!

Joseph Leopold had had the last six out yesterday. His mouth yawned at me like a cave—but no, he wouldn’t have a temporary set; it cost money! A weird fit of economy!

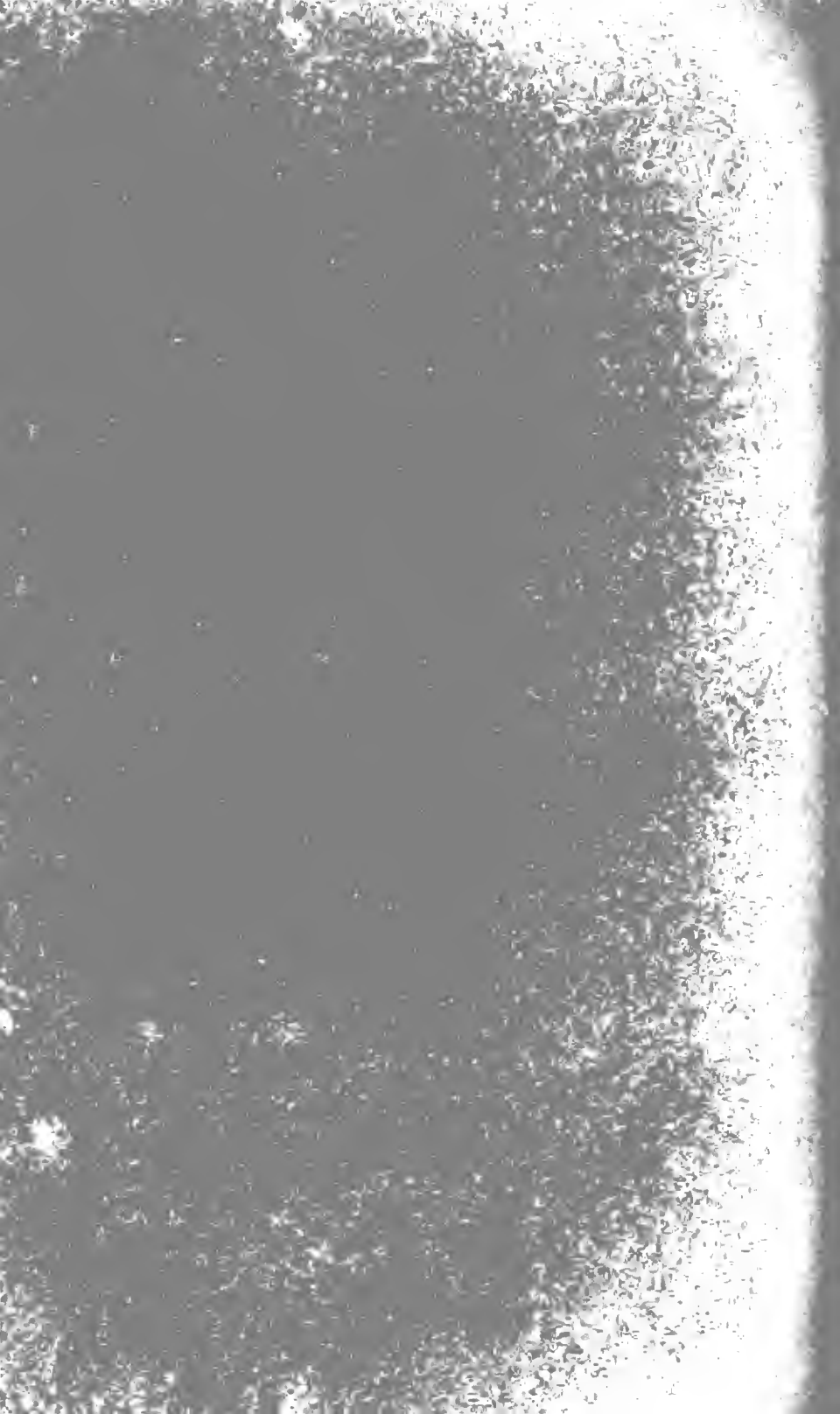
And even so, with astonishing absence of vanity, and I as crocky in my own way of illness as he, we went together into what was now—so I believed—his country.

Gare de l’Est—the ugliest station in Paris. He lost a hundred-franc note on the floor in front of the booking-office in the stress of taking tickets, and shook loudly for fear of my displeasure. But, for once, I was in the mood to be as *gaspilleuse* as he.

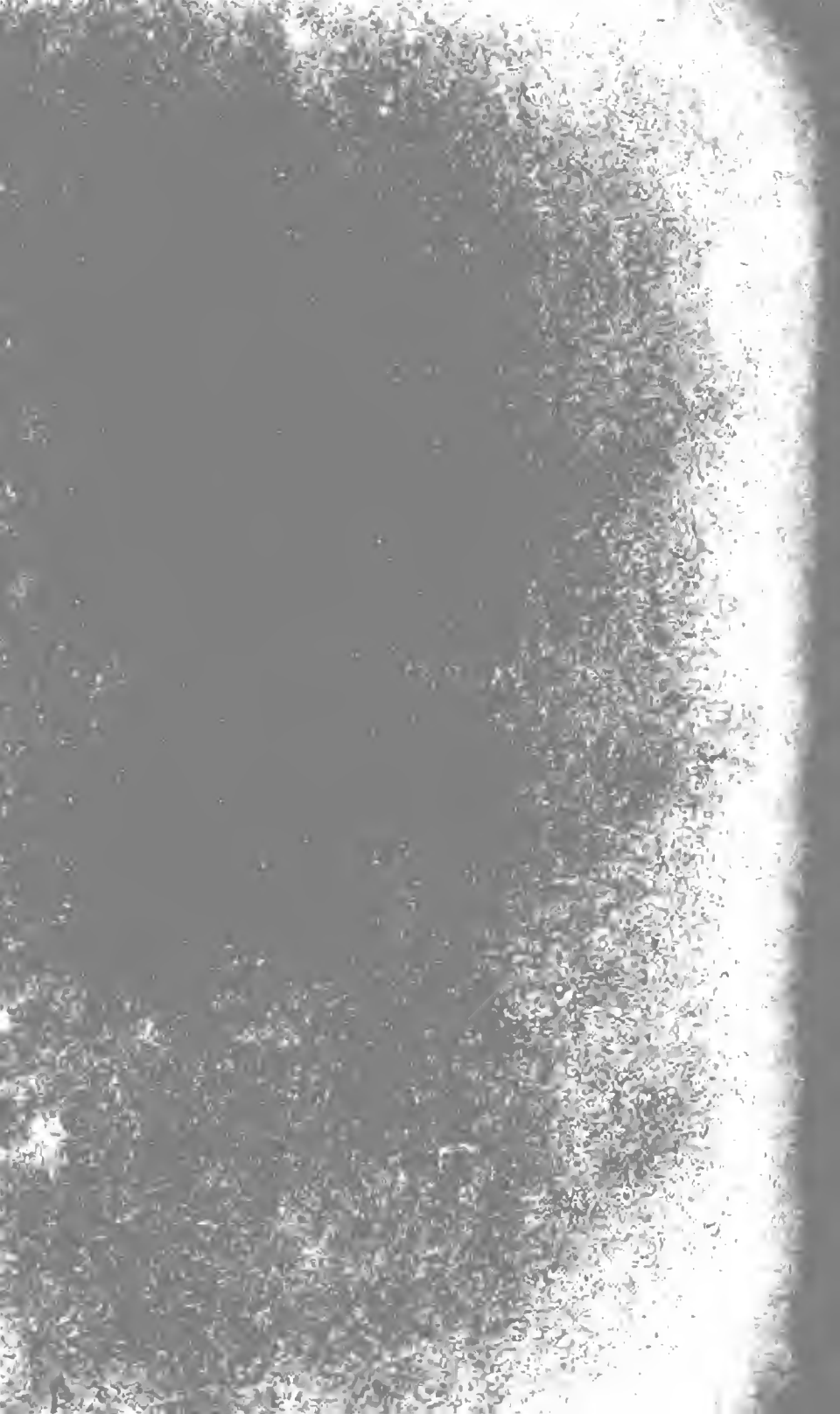
It rained and cleared—and rained again—all in the same breath throughout that day, and in one great and famous clearing, after a heavy shower, we wiped the dim and glistening pane and saw among the blues and yellows of the rainbow-making drops a phantom Cathedral . . . a graceful whiteness that meant spires and pinnacles, far away, posed on the level plain. A cynosure—a landmark—small, because of its great distance, but so pathetic. . . . Rheims under the bow of heaven!

*There is a lacuna here and I may not fill it lest it should be said that I am representing myself to be what I then considered I was in law—his wife. I have been taught since that it was not so—that I never did become his legal wife. So I write of what was in my mind then, and in his, so far as I apprehended it, and of “Alles was dazu mich trieb” . . . I got a few German words out of it all and, what was more, the inhibition of personal egotism for a space of strenuous years.*

*And now ;—“ Excellency, a few goats ! ”*



## PART II



*Things I Cannot Tell—Rheims again in the Dark—The Papers of Naturalisation—Lost or Strayed ?—Bellevue—Teeth—Mary's Hunting Aunt—The Vintage—The Daily Something—The Belgian Frontier—The Wind of the Flail—Mrs. Aria's Party—Marwood and Conrad.*

THE promise of the rainbow was not to be fulfilled. We could not see the blood-red ray in the spectrum, but Germany was all wrong with us! I had felt it all those three days. And coming back through industrial regions flaring in the night, observing in the flash of stations German names—directions—I asked Joseph Leopold: Where were the papers? The papers of naturalisation and what not? Couldn't I see them? It would soothe me, he could translate them by the light of the little oil-lamp trembling on the roof.

Oh, yes, but he had left them with John. John had got them all.

"Damn John!" I said.

He said:

"Come, come, it's his business."

He hadn't seen Linchen at all this time, and only John himself for a minute. He didn't care to have Linchen see him without a tooth in his head. That was why we hadn't dined with them, been near them even. There *were* no papers to speak of; only a big card with all his history, past, present, and to come, written on it—a sort of *carte-de-civisme*. John—bless him!—was perfectly genuine. He had just taken it to be inscribed, ready for Joseph Leopold when he returned to 15 Friedenstrasse with me and his new teeth in. I understood, or said I did.

They had taken it back! . . .

*Ach nein! Ach nein!*

And so on—arguing in terms of love, half angry, half pacified,—I passed out of Germany into Belgium, Picardy, France—lapped, cherished, as one may be once perhaps in a lifetime—unawares rushing past the great sad Cathedral shrouded also in the dark of the future.

Charing Cross again, past the high rostrum without fear : then my home and my mother, a little old woman with immense, unseeing eyes, that took in as much as she wanted of the present—faint eyes turned inward on the holy past of which so soon she would be called to form part. Her thin, fine lips, that had never disclosed a smile since the death of her husband-lover, marked no sneer ; her old heart, like the last year's withered sheath of a fruit, held not love. She merely diffused a weird, futile benevolence on her faithful maid and on me, her piteous, homing daughter.

And yet for me now a little space there was calm, assuredness, no more furtive, chaperoned outgoings and incomings, but a head held high and a bold front for what must come. The sparrow among the horses' hoofs that had so far avoided being trampled. I was older. I had nothing, now, that I could hope to keep. Who does keep ? What benefit but slips through one's fingers, relaxing at the last like those of a spent swimmer, palms outward ? Yet what bane, pre-indicated, is there that cannot with proud intention be faced and borne ?

Deep in the gleaming glass  
She sees all past things pass  
And all sweet life that was  
Lie down . . .

I never saw the Papers, or even the Johns again. The war clapped a stopper on everything for everybody. Mary, who was staying with the Johns when war broke out, was hustled back, thrown out of Germany, made to travel to Hamburg in a cattle-train with other useless mouths, and crossed the Thames thinking that Mr.

Asquith was a prisoner in the Tower and that London was a ruin. She never was more surprised in her life than when she rolled smoothly into Charing Cross Station.

And also as a result of the war, I might say, like Ophelia, "No, no, my lord, you never gave me aught." He has never made me a present in his whole life except a glove made in the form of a bear which, at my request, he bought for me outside the Empire the night we went to see Kyasht with Samuel Sidney McClure.

It was the Wind of the Flail.

Arriving from Trier at midnight (Gare de l'Est), we fell in with the reservists, coming in late. We could hardly get through. In the entry to that outlandish station the wives and mothers stood on trucks and carts to pick out their own from the troops disgorged from the last train. I remembered the conversations that I used to hear at Giessen and Trier—sly talk of the reserves—would they be allowed to go home? The terror of the Socialist menace . . . it had passed off, then? Herr Kiderlen-Waechter's diplomacy had been successful, and so the little recruits *were* going home, crowding the great stations of France and Germany in their thousands. But in England they were still anxious. The manœuvres had been cancelled, *because of the drought* (?) on the very day after rain began to fall! The German ones for the same excuse, and the French because of Foot and Mouth Disease! And the French Ambassador, worn out with diplomacy, had gone quietly to bed—not Berlin.

We went to an hotel at Bellevue, so that the patient could sleep in good air and take the boat up to Paris every morning, past the Tour Eiffel and the little wharves along the river side where Yvette used to go to see her *canotiers*. Bellevue, which used to belong to the Pompadour, with the ruins of her *Brimborion*, ivy-clad in the garden, with the little baby woods of Meudon like a

shingled head, reached by a zig-zag track of cobblestones, just as it was in the thirteenth century and the night-ingales sang as then among the little young trees, which have grown up since they were cut down in the stress of 1870. *Les lauriers sont coupées*. The terrace one dined on, hearing dogs barking in Auteuil down below where, in the dim blue studded with stars of light like the Virgin's mantle in churches, Paris lay.

And we did as Napoleon, in his cynical wisdom, prophesied Europe would do on hearing the news of his demise: "*Elle poussera un grand 'Ouf!'*" It was so nice to be done with the need for chaperonage: arranging for it had been *my* task—Joseph Leopold was so incurably Bohemian—and I had found it very irksome. It was pleasant to have pretty things sent, pleasant things written to one, and as soon as Joseph Leopold was presentable, we meant to go home and gather up all these joys and advantages and hold a literary salon. That has always been my dream. And, for a space, it was realised. I have not so much to complain of.

Invitations began to pour in . . . parties given in my honour and his. . . I adored parties only a little less than he did. But it was too soon. Joseph Leopold still looked a—well, what, with astonishing lack of personal vanity, he did not even begin to realise. So there was nothing for it but to stop on at Bellevue where every prospect indeed pleased but where the catering was vile. Though Bellevue was very, very smart, though the band played *Tristan* and *Faust* every night on the terrace and all the French aristocracy and its children played about there, we did not get enough to eat. I spoke to the manager. He promised *quelque chose de plus copieux*. Three minnows on a plate for the two of us! So the teeth followed the dentist to Quend-sur-Mer, a nice, new, raw *plage*—an hotel with stone floors in one's bedroom, with streets that were just shifting rivers of sand,

where one wore no stockings. We saw the beach from our windows, and watched, when a certain hissing noise was heard, all the mothers rushing like hens, clucking, to gather their broods under their wings. For why? One of those new aeroplanes was flying low from Berck to Fort Mahon! At lunch and dinner, nuns sitting next us told of the food riots at St. Quentin. The world was really in a very disturbed state! I was busy *un-hareming* my skirt, putting a little petticoat under it, as, Agnes informed me, was moderately the fashion now—to be worn on a visit I was going to pay to Mrs. George Stringer, Mary Martindale's good sport of an aunt, who liked me for my general dash and daring, taking big jumps in other fields than those in which her horse's hoofs were cast. And she would have it that I was a kind of relation—on the wrong side of the blanket. An Armada Don, who, to use Lady Colin Campbell's famous explanation of her own parentage and Spanish eyes, had "tampered" with our pedigree. I certainly *was* the image of a sister of hers who died, a Harrison, and I am a Harrison, too—the Barnard Castle ones.

It was George Stringer himself who wrote and sent me a formal invitation to Hovingham Spa, a tiny, roughish but comfortable inn in the North Riding, where this devotee of the chase had boxed herself and her husband and her favourite new hunter, prepared to go out three days a week. I knew how it would be! All day she would be after the hounds, and her husband and I would wait dinner, expecting to see her brought back on a shutter. But, when it did happen, I was not there to see. Poor Edith Stringer!

It was time, too, that I went to have a look at my mother, the saddest of all experiences to me now. It was just a little attention I paid her. I would just walk into her room, kiss her and say, "Well, Mamma, how are you?" She would not answer now, kiss back, or

even smile. She preferred her nice nurse to any of her daughters. She confounded me with Goneril!

A week in England would do it—did both.

Then I returned, and accompanied Joseph Leopold back into Germany by way of Luxemburg. We arrived there at one o'clock. When I saw Luxemburg, composed of rows of villas with machicolated palings, exactly like Holland Park Road, Joseph Leopold tells everybody I gave one wild scream, and said, "Let's get into Germany," where the vintage was just beginning.

It had been the hottest summer since 1453. The outrageous heat which was Europe's poison was the South German's meat, and the vintage was going to be a record one. This was the true *pax Germanica*—no noise, no quarrelling, an almost Sabbatical hush. Germany was going to get in its harvest. The crop is set anywhere and everywhere, perched on every possible coign, on a mountain—anywhere where it may catch the sun. The vines cover the hills like green fur on the haunches of a big dog. The vine plant, taken singly, is to me a pathetic object, like a doll, dressed like an early Victorian lady, in a gown flounced to the waist, of soft taffetas in faintly differing shades. They reminded me of the late Lady Wilde, who had dressed just like this.

And everyone was friendly, and I was reassured. It was an effect of the vintage. It was not a Gin—but a Vine crawl. We were all of us all day picking grapes, tasting grapes, choosing and buying them in the great tubs in which they came down in carts from the vine terraces. Everybody was doing it. The landlord of our hotel was a great *Weinhandler*, and put us up to bargains, as he would for himself. At the close of the day we came back in the little ambling trains with pickers, pressers, and *Weinhandlers*; lovers wreathing each other with vine tendrils, mothers of families sticking them in their hats, while little green, translucent marbles fell out

of parcels and rolled all over the floors of the carriages. It was a madness, and, like all madresses, at the bottom of the madness is blood and a human sacrifice. The juices of a human body are sov'ran for the vine root that is to grow into the tree that spreads all over the roof. The best manure is human, but most of the householders have to be content with a pair of old boots or a portmanteau.

Pickers, Pressers, and *Weinhandlers*, I liked them all; I liked everybody in Germany this time, except the officers, and I hated them so and their beastly attitude—to all men, their own countrymen even—that I could hardly be as civil as Joseph Leopold would have me be. He was now, if you please, a German and a potential officer himself. If war broke out and he were caught on German soil, he must either fight or be shot. Not much, against England!

I resented having to wait in the street at Hildesheim in the sun to have my lunch till the officers had had theirs, standing under the sill of the *Speise Saal*, peeping under the blind where I could only see their legs and the points of their swords touching the floor as they ate little crabs stewed in wine. I disliked the way every little *Einjahriger* in his skimpy grey suit stood up and let his food run out of his mouth as he saluted, while his superior on his way to the *stammtisch* labelled "*Reservirt*," and in his brilliant and flamboyant cloak, brushed the salt-cellar off my table in passing. I hated to have the deep peace of the woods broken for me a hundred times in the course of half an hour's walk by "Rub-a-dub, rub-a-dub" from one of the many concealed *casernes*. I hated to look down from the top of the 'bus and see the naked soldiers washing their clothes or themselves, calmly, out of doors in barrack yards.

And, when you did talk to anyone in the lounge of the hotel, if there was one, it was all about the Socialist menace

and the return or no of the reserves that heralds the coming of the autumn as *Mai-Bowle* does that of the spring. Socialism was the reason why there wasn't an ounce of gold in Trier—but there never is in the autumn. Something to do with it . . . some precaution?

Three years of constant agitation had done their work, and I went back to Spa to be doctored. Spa was not the same. Faces were *morne*. Even then the spectre of war stalked—though humbly for the moment. It had been put back in the cupboard for the time by the address of Herr Kiderlen-Waechter, afraid, as yet, of "*Der Tag*." But there was a restlessness, a hush among the population, scurrying like autumn leaves . . . darts for safety . . . hedgings . . . while bold spirits in Spa said simply, "Oh, we know, we Belgians, that we—our land—are going to be fought over!" One never could drive very far towards the east without coming across the Squashed Crow of Prussia. One day we decided to go to Montjoie across the frontier, past Malmédy, and to buy cigars and marquetry furniture with the Guilleaumes. The car was at the door to take us when a card was sent in. A reporter from England: *The Daily Something*.

I whispered to Joseph Leopold, "Don't let him in." I didn't want publicity, I deprecated it, although we both of us had new books out. It is simply an odious literary "wheeze" unworthy of either of us. I retreated to the inner room to put on my boots for Montjoie, and while I was stooping I distinctly heard Joseph Leopold offering someone a drink. I looked through the door and saw a mild young man looking very travel-stained, explaining that he had been travelling all night and that his chief had sent a letter announcing his arrival, which Joseph Leopold was declaring he had never received. More conversation, of an exceedingly general character, so far as I could make out.

He was dismissed politely, and we started for Montjoie. But I understood that the young gentleman "rested" all day in Spa, and pottered about, visiting Houtermans, where Joseph Leopold went most nights to play billiards with the son of the house and that interesting rip, Count M., whose relations kept him at Spa for cheapness. And on Monday, as we saw by the papers, the harm was done!

A Frontier! Herbestal is a frontier, and a station too. The frontier is a line like the equator of our childhood, without breadth or thickness, drawn across the road we were to cross. One pictures *vedettes*—sentinels with *képis*, anyway, soldiers—decent fellows who mean no harm, but have been taught for years in a sunlit square to go for a bag of sawdust stitched into the semblance of a man with a bayonet—chatting with the other fellow, exchanging drinks, putting one leg, but not more, over the imaginary line of demarcation. I became, though ill, excited. Bowling along a heath, down declivities and a blue sheen on the horizon that was Germany, I began to shed my wraps, stand up, and ask questions.

"What are those?" of hills that looked like north-country slag-heaps, obviously made by man, with wheelbarrows trundled to the edge and allowed to roll down. But the wheelbarrows were derelict; no man was there to wheel them.

"German railway lines," said Emile Guillaume.

"But why are they left like that—unfinished?"

"They may not carry them—yet—any farther than the frontier. But they are so as to be ready."

From that moment war—war between somebody or other—became an actuality to me. Not Germany attacking, not that moment! Just then the boot was on the other leg. France was ready. France was belligerent. Inflammatory posters to that effect were up everywhere.

We were descending, slowly, the hill.

"Germany down there," Joseph Leopold said. "You'll see the Squashed Crow in a minute."

A little cottage, and no garden, squarely set down in the dip. The eagle of Prussia on the signboard, nothing else. It was the *Douane*. The chauffeur shook his head. Nothing to declare! The taciturn officer sitting inside a kind of grille looked us over and made us free of Germany. We saw nothing, but we heard "Rub-a-dub, rub-a-dub," and, as the chauffeur told us, passed two separate army corps being reviewed, and then we came to Montjoie, a little town like a chromolithograph on the outside of a chocolate box. Small fir trees, lining both sides of the street with green, brushed the wheels of our car. They were staged, not planted, for the Kaiser had just visited Montjoie, and the yellow paper roses festooning the pink house of *Commerciens Rath O.* had not yet faded after their manner, for there had been no rain since.

An operation, and home, in time for Mrs. Aria's "ten o'clock." Passage bad. Only Joseph Leopold and I and a French lady keeping our ends up, staring at the water pouring through the scuppers; the rest were lying like badly packed herrings, heads to tails, like victims laid out for the car of Juggernaut to pass over them. No room to live, no room to die, no room to be sick in. Five minutes before we were due into Dover Joseph Leopold stumbled to the steward's cabin, where he keeps his champagne. . . .

"You can't be sick here, sir!"

"I can!" gravely, and was.

The anecdote was in *Punch* next week.

We landed on the wrong pier—the trimmings of the other were all swept away—walked in a blizzard to the London train, and I was in a new dress and at Mrs. Aria's by eleven o'clock.

My mother was quasi all right, a partially mummified corpse, in better health, happier, and content within her borders and her floor to herself. I was not wanted, and Lady Byron lent me her house at Sandgate, nice and near Joseph Leopold's great friends, Conrad and Marwood.

Goneril and Co. were still chipping me, but, like the toad under the harrow, being "larned" to be a toad, I was getting used to it. And Professor Ker, who had been up to see Goneril, went for a walk with her, and reported that she still spoke of me with affection. "I believe you could get on with her if you came. She is fond of you. I told her that I owed a great deal to you—indeed, it is one of the purely happy things in my life that you should have honoured me with your confidence."

But, in spite of this, the pretty little policy of pin-pricks that ends by bleeding one to death went on. Criticisms of my method of procuring the comfort of my mother, domestic details, set forth on foolscap sheets with acres of margin. . . .! I threatened to resign my job, which would have put everybody in a hole, so I was let alone for a time.

Then Joseph Leopold took it into his head to get distracted. One night, I remember, there had been various doings in town . . . my maid had been up to town charged to carry a letter *re* the children—you may be sure there was a cheque in it!—to their uncle, and had come back again in time for dinner with the story of an Implacable Face . . . seen at the station. . . . She had felt awful all the way in the train coming back . . . seeing Those Eyes! She had walked back all the way, her heart in her big boots, expecting to find me scragged!

She engagingly told us all this, with details added and worked up, as she waited at dinner, and when I was lying in bed that night, rather early, Joseph Leopold came up with a white, scared face and asked me if I had heard the front door bell ring a few moments ago. I hadn't.

But, he said, it had pealed all through the house. . . .

No more was said that night; but, moved by a sense of imminence, I woke at five, got up, and went over the house. The place was all tied up with odd straps, strings, and dog-leads; a bicycle, out of its place, obstructed the door; my maid was locked into her room, also Lady Byron's cook. Only the dog, a fierce bull terrier I had bought, roamed unshackled about the stairs. And all this for fear that the Eyes had meant mischief.

It was the beginning of a fresh attack of neurasthenia that lasted three whole years, and was responsible for many things, and much private and particular misery. Marwood, called in, said I must get Joseph Leopold out of it. . . . Of all people he best appreciated the situation, and seemed to think my position disastrous. He saw no way out of it unless it was to go where writs didn't run. Paris! Why didn't Joseph Leopold apply for a foreign correspondentship? But—"Ah, *you* can't go, poor thing; you are tied to your mother." And then, sitting with me in the long rock garden stretching right down to the sea, he suggested a plan . . . slimmish. . . .

I demurred. Everybody, he said, would not have been so scrupulous. "Remember that people don't impute higher motives to others than they have themselves."

As for Joseph Leopold, the best cure for him was congenial society. René Byles, now manager of the *Throne*, was got down to stay, and I arranged that Joseph Leopold should see as much of Conrad as might be. The way to Conrad's heart just then was a motor-car, so we used to get one from Clayson's and go out to Orlestone to bring the Conrads and the little boy, Jackolo, back to lunch. In the dining-room here, from whose windows, as one sat at meat, one could see all the sea between Grisnez and Dungeness: the old sea dog, excitable, eager, was distracted from his lunch—welcoming, describing the nature of the craft, large and

small, that sailed or steamed past. He called Joseph Leopold and me "dear"—it was perhaps a sign of affection as far as Joseph Leopold was concerned, but I think it was just a foreign locution, a neat and kind finial to a sentence. He reminded me a little of another quasi-foreigner, William Quiller Orchardson, the Scot with an Austrian grandmother (whom he never let you forget) to whom I used to sit for the Empress Josephine at Westgate. Conrad was adorable. Or we would go to tea or dinner with them in that queer, squat, flat-roofed house, set down in a marshy meadow just off a white, winding road bordered by deep ditches, in which marshmallows grew and low fences over which cattle yearned their heads. Flat, flat—the heart of the country which Joseph Leopold once described, a soft, even level, such as all lives should be—are sometimes—a desert, perhaps, but—fit to be called peace.

While Joseph Conrad and Joseph Leopold were inside discussing serious things—*le mot juste*, or a further collaboration; *Reality* to succeed *Romance*—Mrs. Conrad would walk me along the road. She knew all the people who indirectly swayed my fortunes, and she meant to be kind. In her little foreign way, perhaps learned from her husband (she is, of course, quite English), she hinted at some shadowy horror, some "catastrophe" or other which was preparing for me. Can a catastrophe—which is usually the Will of God—be prepared for a particular person? I then thought kind Mrs. Conrad wool-gathering . . . fallacious . . . trying her hand at her husband's *métier*. I little knew.

A minor catastrophe—engineered by nobody—occurred inside at tea. I "cheeked" Mr. Conrad—I see it now; but I had played with lions so often in my life that I didn't anticipate a pat from the paw of one. Sitting at the long, low table that stretched from the window into the dark infinity of the sideboard at the other end

of the room, next Conrad, the tea-maker—or was tea over, and had Mrs. Conrad relinquished her seat?—I embarked on a political discussion with the great man. Joseph Leopold was having another political discussion far away at the sideboard end, and I, unprotected, found myself up against, suddenly, a soi-disant believer in the Divine Right of Kings.

I have two subjects on which I am well read and well advised, and one is the French Revolution. The course of my reading had not inculcated a very high view of the political honesty of Marie Antoinette, but I certainly did not approach her problem in “a frivolous, fine-lady fashion” (*vide* Joseph Leopold in his *Life of Conrad*), but I do consider The Austrian’s husband, in spite of his wits crowded out by adipose, to be the finer, more responsible character. Yes, I thought that the unfortunate Louis XVI had come to be *unter den Pantoffel* of a, politically speaking, dishonourable woman, who ended by having his head off and her own for the political crime of inviting the foreign invader to come into the country that had become hers by marriage, and which had adopted her for weal or woe. That France made her life a burden to her, and would not let her leave it, seems to me to have nothing to do with the matter. I dared to say this to Conrad, whose every word I was drinking in and whose compelling personality sheerly and starkly fascinated me. I have never seen a man who had this power of re-making everyone who had the honour of listening to him into his own image. . . .

Well, I suppose that I was not sufficiently susceptible for the moment to the ether, the laughing gas of his personality—not quite “gone off,” and stupidly disregarded the intense, wolf-like expression which came over his face and ought to have warned me that I was on dangerous ground. The sparrow hopping among the hoofs! I said that I considered Marie Antoinette,

as titular Queen of France, to be technically a traitress!

There was a noise and clatter. Conrad brought his fist down on the tin tea-tray, and the cups danced horribly, but not one was broken, as Joseph Leopold has stated. And, indeed, he could not have heard from his place at the very end of the table, his ears submissive to the drone of a bore. . . .

Conrad had said, his eyes darting fire—a blue shade seeming to play about his chin:

“I believe in the Divine Right of Kings.”

And no more about it. Mrs. Conrad had not turned a hair. She never did. The perfect wife for an author!

We took them little drives in the car, and as many of them as we could, especially when there were, perhaps, for the moment “only a few goats.” For the explanation of this intimate catchword look at the last few words of *Romance*—“Excellency, a few goats!” That was Joseph Leopold’s and Joseph Conrad’s mode of intimating that money, or credit, or health, was tight! It is another way of saying, as I do in like conditions, “*Alles ist hin*” (“All is lost”).

Joseph Leopold had taken off his boots in the Conrads’ anteroom and forgotten to put them on again, driving home with composure in his stockinged feet. They came next day, with a kind note from the very great man to me. Not a word of Marie Antoinette. But maybe the incident had discomposed Joseph Leopold. The note dilated, perhaps in irony?—for under certain pedicular conditions men and women, too, *like* sitting in their stockinged feet—on Joseph Leopold’s exquisite regard for the polished floors of the Palazzo Conrad. It had brought tears to the host’s eyes when he “looked round on the rough and unfeeling world which encompasseth us all.” A little dig at the eternal rival:

“You should see the good Marwood’s Alpine boots!”

*Aunt Jane and Canon Greenwell—The "Throne"—My Mother does not know me—Adalin—Rebecca West—Cubism and Wyndham Lewis—Selsey and Princess Maleine—The Poison Ring—A Workaday Heaven for me—Goneril—My Mother's Death—Mary's suspicions—Treason at Giessen—Joseph Leopold to Germany—To finish his job—Horrors of the Cause List—Boulogne—A Bed of Nails not Roses—Trial over the Telephone—Meet Joseph Leopold on the other side—Conrad recommends Montpellier—His Sense of Colour—I see Carcassonne—Mad Dogs and Horoscopes—The Château d'Amour—Conrad and James—"Patch with purple if you must"—Corsica.*

*The Governess*, a novel begun long ago by my mother and finished by me, had appeared in March. Years ago she had given the manuscript to me, saying I must please finish it, as *she* never could, publish it as a serial, and make what money I could out of it. I agreed. Joseph Leopold helped me. It came out.

"Just the kind of book your dear mother *would* write," my Aunt Jane wrote from the North, which showed how cleverly I and Joseph Leopold had caught my mother's style and "joined" her flats. "A nice, quiet book," my Aunt Jane continued, and was going to lend it to the vicar.

She possibly remembered her elder sister's first novel, which would not at all answer to that description, containing, as it did, striking and viperous portraits of the Dean, not to speak of the Bishop and the Bishop's wife. It created a nine days' scandal in Durham, and was let out by the lending library at half a crown an hour—"and mind you return it in time!"

Aunt Jane was now fairly placated. Things had turned out rather better than she had expected. She had been to see my godfather, the Canon, who called her "Janey"

in memory of old times, and appeared to be quite proud of his godchild. He thought Joseph Leopold charming—we had been to see him—and so did the Dean and the Archdeacon. But he could not read his books. He liked “shockers” in the *Mail*. And I, from what she heard, was in quite a nice set in London—good county people, and titles, who lent me their houses. She would continue heartily to pray for me, if not on the old count, abolished, then on one count or another. And she would intercede for me with Goneril, who did not consider the book good or worth raking up, and thought I ought to have let it rest and not make money out of my poor mother’s infirmities. Goneril a literary critic! That was rich!

This “nice, quiet book” it may have been which led up to Mrs. Conrad’s “catastrophe.” The poor *Throne* reviewed it kindly and favourably, with portraits of my mother and myself and descriptive remarks below. I was quite pleased when I saw the review, little thinking that the “nice, quiet book” was to be the ground of *fracas*. It was sought to gain an injunction on the ground that its publication was unauthorised . . . the book had *not* been given to me . . . it was not good. My mother, had she been sensible, would have deplored its publication. *Et patati et patata!*

This set a little match—one of the little matches that were constantly being set to my funeral pyre; some flared up and some went out, but this one made quite a blaze. In April my resignation from the Receivership, which in January I had threatened if Goneril went on interfering with me, was again tendered and accepted in the form of a demand from her. In May formal proceedings were instituted; the case came on. Again and again I had to dress soberly—I don’t know why my instinct was so to do—and, getting out of a ’bus just before it got to Temple Bar, where my Jacobite ancestor’s head

had rotted because he opened the gates of Carlisle to the men of his opinion, proceed to the side door in Bell Yard and up the stone staircase to face again the pathetic figure of The Master—my mother's old friend, stricken as she was, striving as she did against fearful odds—to do his work of administering equal justice to her daughters and see that they treated her properly. Just a little family quarrel—everybody a little in the wrong, for nobody is ever quite in the right in a family quarrel, since family passions are apt to run so high.

Blindness is my particular fear and horror, the Eumenides of our family—"Papa's eyes," "Mamma's eyes"—phrases on every one's lips! The constant condition of those of my mother was the reason why I had read everything since the day she found I could spell and pronounce "ecclesiastical." Two hours a day in the dining-room, sometimes interested, sometimes not. The Master's clerk delivering slowly the words of important documents, called up my old sense of pity for one so dependent on a mere child and "not able to have anything improper read," as she used to say, laughing. So I sympathised with The Master, though I writhed under his sarcasms.

A disconsolate author was at my side to support me. Sulky, top-hatted, loathing it—and almost me!

René Byles was still friendly to me, and urgent in my service—a stormy petrel, the thorn in his editor's side, the potential wrecker of his darling paper. As early as June there was an action threatened against it—on my account—and again in July. But not till next year did the threat materialise.

I did not dread it. I didn't for a moment think that the Chief and Byles wouldn't come out on top, but it would, of course, worry them and Joseph Leopold a good deal. All through the year I watched the case creeping up the List in the *Telegraph* . . . nearer . . . nearer!



MY SISTER

V.H.

[p 208



The gadfly began to buzz in the June of 1912. It advanced its proboscis and stung in the February of next year.

The saddest thing about the law is the law's delays. There were delays; there always are; all actions seem to require time, and six months seems about the least possible time required for their incubation, just as, in a telegram, you cannot be polite under one shilling and three pence. So say I, speaking as a ruthless laywoman, for, writing as a suffragette, I must tacitly include my own sex among those privileged to wear robe and gown. I don't really know why I have not constantly confided my legal affairs to one of these; it is very inconsistent of me!

Perhaps one cause of delay is that the law, like trades unions preaching down the worker's heart, will not let its workers lay too many bricks in a day. First the challenge . . . then months of sparring and back-chat . . . then the fight, or part of it . . . the backers waiting with their towels ready to flap . . . refreshers . . . and then the knock-out blow, the perfunctory handshake, the thin, shoddy consolations of compromise. . . .

The *Throne* affair wasn't the only thing. There was bankruptcy—another spectre, so it seems to be to most people. I don't think Joseph Leopold minded the idea much. It was minded for him. For myself, I never can see why it appears such a spectre—to one's kind family lawyer, anyway. After all, why should a hard-working man, earning just so much money—part of which is hypothecated to others—by the sweat of his brow and the waste of his mental tissue, object to the law's managing, in return for a small consideration, his earnings for him, apportioning them where they are due, leaving him enough to live on and to pay for a desk whereon to write, and a secretary to take down what he does write? Women don't mind bankruptcy as much

as men do. Perhaps that is why they are so seldom threatened with it. I suppose a man hates the feeling of being compelled always to spend ready money, not allowed to run up bills. A bankrupt can hardly use the grand manner, being at the best a minor under tutelage. It is the Victorian prejudice against a man's not being master in his own house and everywhere else as well, that still obtains.

And that's not all! My own special law business in which Joseph Leopold had nothing to say—nor wanted to—the nightmare charge of my mother. This is the very natural function of a daughter, as I have said, an act of filial piety required of me, accepted of me; but, since the assuming of it, I had been heckled, thwarted, misinterpreted, handicapped on all sides, so that I felt it almost a burden too heavy. And yet, for her sake, I thought I must not lay it down. She must die in her own house, not in . . . .

And the worst, I knew, was to come, when the beloved burden should slip off.

Heavy! She! The little still, silent, shrunken witch of a parent, as light as a feather . . . mentally as imponderable, that I had taken on my back to bear through the bogs and the thorns, under the thudding hail of abuse and blistering raindrops of opprobrium, was coming to be regarded by me in the light of the fairy whom the kind man in the tale offered to shoulder—the little load of mischief that grew to him heavier and heavier, till he became aware that he was bearing the weight of a supernatural being which would weigh him down and crush him in the end.

One version says it was his own sins. . . .

It was too much. I became a nuisance about the house—a woman of one idea, and that an unpleasant one antithetic to sociability, to the lure of sex, and to

the production of good literature. Talk of poverty and the consequent flight of Love out of the window—it does not clear the room of all amatory stuff like a woman with a lawsuit on ! I thought of nothing else ; I dreamed of nothing else. I used my power of imagination, of “a fire God gave for other ends,” in order to work up the horrors of my own twopenny-halfpenny case. I had nightmares, when I seemed to be dragged backwards and forwards by an angry Goneril, sometimes by my hair even, up and down the stone floors of the Law Courts.

All this damned me thoroughly with Joseph Leopold who complained bitterly of my natal restlessness, increased by the extra cargo foisted on me by Fate. My behaviour was absolutely antagonistic to him and his particular *Wesen*. Why could I not be quiet, possess my soul in patience, take a sleeping-draught at night, and Adalin, that nice new German drug, by day, as he did ? I knew he did (four a night, into which I was gradually drafting bread pills). Tebby-Tebb had prescribed that and real Adalin for me ! I needed it.

I seem to remember going about this queer, dry, hot summer of 1912 to garden-parties where you were never cool, to suppers under trees where bustling night insects dashed against the lamps and moths flapped and died. I gave suppers, too. I must keep Joseph Leopold amused since my sorrows made me unavailable. I was useless, living in a dream, full of the kind drug which we were both taking. It did not hurt one . . . only made one something of a philosopher. I remember kind Mrs. Stringer wondering what was the matter with me, offering to take me away to Yorkshire for the hunting. Hunting ! Far too healthy a sport for me ! I interested myself in watching Maleine drifting about our house in her own modest but queenly, superior way, soothed, positively, by her beauty and the gentle cynicism of the

few words she said. In and out, all days and every day.

Did she? Did he? Wouldn't she? It and I didn't matter. . . .

I must have been a bore. It was no use talking to me for I never listened. I was "only thinking about my sisters." My terror of what might happen to me—locks and keys—warders and prison cells—looked out of my eyes continually.

Joseph Leopold wanted to abate the nuisance. He enjoined short views! If they did eventually succeed in downing me, why, we could simply chuck the whole thing and go back to Germany, as a standby, its savage dreariness tempered with little trips to San Sebastian or Montjoie or even to Le Touquet where the great Vardon was playing golf. . . .

For really if I went on like this, thinking of nothing else but law and lawsuits, boring my friends with questions unanswerable till after the event, asking for tips, suggestions as to what I ought to do or ought not to do—a far bigger list—I should have no one but myself to thank for what might happen. No man could stand living side by side with a woman whose sympathies were all afield, the sodden prey of an *idée fixe*—not of him—and consequently no earthly good to anyone. Why did I worry so about money, a woman of my intellect?

Well, I replied pettishly, because *someone* had to! And I stood to lose every penny I had in the world if I lost my case. And *le mot juste* would be hard put to it to keep me. This extremely difficult contingency it was which gave me my nightmares.

Joseph Leopold seemed, to the naked eye, to take it all pretty calmly—his own troubles and mine. He sat there in the Futurist room, neatly and with aplomb dictating his daily screed of typewritten pages. He preserved at least his literary balance, the pendulum of his thought ticking backwards and forwards with an

even motion. Great man! He could concentrate. His inner commotion was subdued by the superior claims of Literature on its votary. Perfect copy flowed from his mouth as he walked up and down the room. No corrections were made or apparently needed; he scorned to look over a manuscript after his secretary had typed it. And why—since the line was cleared as for an express train? No alarms or excursions of the brain were allowed to interfere with its mass product. As for the quality—the *avoidsupois*—that must be left with the critics, whom he little regarded, except perhaps Edward Garnett.

And then Marwood got cross with us. Joseph Leopold and I had made a book which perpetrated one of those literary dastardies unavoidable in his profession and mine—so I firmly submit.

It is a fact not generally realised, except with painters, that all artists must have models, especially the modern ones. That distinguished Academician, Fuseli, ate a raw beefsteak and went to bed and dreamed, not true, but such ineffable scenes of horror that he needed not to use actual models, but relied on the inventions of his sleeping, beef-iodised brain. Mary Shelley wrote "Frankenstein," and who now reads about that affected, unconvincing monster? The present school of painters who go to bed soberly and use living models at four shillings an hour do the head from one—expensive—and the hands from another—less expensive—and the bust, say, from their own wife—perfectly cheap. The conglomeration or concatenation can hardly be called a portrait. So when a literature-picture of a total personality is put together it is non-libellous in effect, being a mere blend—an action of A's, a speech of D's, a look of C, the hair or eyes of F. Surely such a preparation or composite of aliens cannot possibly be dubbed a description of Z.

It is a pity, but the public must realise that authors, like beggars, cannot be choosers.

At least this particular work gave us Rebecca West, whose literary *flair* and *connaissance du style* could not be deceived or side-tracked, and who, devoting to our effort a whole column of wit and innuendo—as destructive about, as a prairie fire—laid us waste and made us her friends for life. She butchered us to make a holiday for a number of *The*—won't it be kinder and wiser to blank the name of the publication? She little knew. "Oh, Diamond! Diamond!"

There was nothing else, I said, to do but ask this dangerous woman to tea. It would be turning the other cheek—two cheeks.

She came. She had a pink dress on and a large, wide-brimmed, country-girlish straw hat that hid her splendid liquid eyes, which, however, no brim of any hat could hinder one from apprehending. She kept her feet planted very regularly and firmly together, and throughout the interview retained her handsome handbag (which was rather like a satchel) on her lap, where she had placed it when I said timidly, "Won't you sit down, Miss West?"

She was sweet and reasonable, but not to be kidded. We told her stories about the work in question, and she appeared to believe us. She was very good at listening, and when she spoke she used a voice—not of gold exactly, like the fabled one of Sarah Bernhardt, but, let us say, one compounded of milk and honey, something mellifluous, soothing, like sweet bells rung in tune. And quite superiorly, ostentatiously, young—the ineffable schoolgirl! She was, in fact, only eighteen, and she already ruled Fleet Street. She is to-day, as Conrad was, a compelling, holding, powerful personality. She *must* count; once she is in a room you cannot imagine it without her, except as a room in Ditchwater. If she



MISS REBECCA WEST AT HOME



wants to hurt you she will ; if she wants to be kind to you, well and very good ! There is no paltering with the idea of Rebecca ; she makes, not so much a splash, as a definite hole in the world.

A languid airless summer, rife with Law and Cubism, spent at Selsey with Princess Maleine as sole guest and play-secretary. Her husband flitted backwards and forwards in his car, now recalling her, now giving her a new leave of absence. Joseph Leopold, playing golf, eating little contraband crabs, writing poems, and helping me with my novel, and taking a car into Chichester on Sundays to attend Mass in his own church, contrived to wile the summer away. He wrote Impressionist ; she painted Futurist ; in dress, we two women went a step farther and dressed Vorticist, which was newer than Futurism, than Cubism, than Impressionism, old-fashioned almost by now, but which Joseph Leopold was still practising in his cunning *vers libres*.

The very clothes we rejoiced to wear made us feel like it ; they coarsened us, I think. Non-representational art makes for hardness, enjoins the cynicism that likes to look upon the crudenesses, the necessities of life merely—the red of beef, the blue of blouses, the shine of steel knives in a butcher's shop. Better, said Wyndham Lewis, than a dying stag or a virgin in Greek dress picking daisies. But this kind of art died in the war, being relegated chiefly to the camouflaging of ships. A faint echo of it is to be seen in modern jazz.

My friend was very beautiful, with a queer, large, tortured mouth that said the wittiest things, eyes that tore your soul out of your body for pity and yet danced. She had no physique, as doctors would say ; no health, as women would say ; and—as no woman would ever admit except me—charm enough to damn a regiment. I used to call her the Leaning Tower, or Princess Maleine,

that heroine of Maeterlinck who, with her maid, was prisoned in a tower for ten years and dug herself out with her nails. She ought not to have dressed in butcher blue with red blood spots on it. She was much more like one of those delicate, anæmic, mediæval ladies whose portraits are traced on old tapestries, their small waists seeming to be set between the enormous wings of the hennin and the heavy rolls of their trains that spread all round their feet. The modern blouse and skirt of Maleine, born out of her century, always appeared to be falling off her, her crown of heavy hair toppling, her deep brown eyes protesting against Fate and the absurd limitations of behaviour applied to supermen and underwomen. She was no real suffragette, though she had collected with me and rattled a box at stations. Nothing but her eyes protested. Delicately cynical, she accepted things as they were.

She was gentle and patient, even in her desperate illness. In health she was easily the easiest woman to live with I have ever known, and she stayed with me long at Selsey. Intermittently, when she was well enough, like all the other pretty ladies she played secretary to Joseph Leopold, and, in the evenings he read aloud to us from the script that she knew well, having taken it down at dictation that very morning. That is the way we did in the heartless days of the Cube and the Line. He would "pay out" in a rope of measured, even tamish cadences, that yet held emotion, the poem that I had asked him to write for *me*.

I had said pettishly :

"You say you believe in a heaven ; I wish you'd write one for me. I want no beauty ; I want no damned optimism ; I want just a plain, workaday heaven that I can go to some day and enjoy it when I'm there."

I confess I had thought of the ultimate cataclysm as, alone in the mornings while the dictation was going on,

I wandered round one or other of the three beaches of Selsey, conscious of the drone of a sad sea line on the two other sides, pacing on the edge, without looking where I was going, of the octagonal tanks that represented the efforts of the inhabitants of the peninsula to keep the sea in here, let it out there. . . . The Selsey sea is not a Swinburne sea—no sea lions racing in, no foam, no spume; just “*the British Channel . . . like a strip of flannel*” under the moon at night. . . . I would come in late sometimes for lunch, and I would meet the poet rushing, hatless, down the village street, wanting to know if I had committed suicide.

Not yet; although I had my poison ring, like the head of an enamelled, jewelled toad, with the bolt that shot and the lid that lifted, disclosing a cavity just big enough to hold a mere pinch of nitrate of amyl—that was the poison that Mr. Harcourt, at the Oxford laboratory, had suggested for the use of the heroine of my novel, *Unkist, Unkind*, years ago. All I had done with my ring as yet was to put a Saxine tablet into the cache in order to unnerve the man who took me in to dinner.

I was a little like my own heroine, Sibella, but I realised in my saner moments that authors need Egerias, and that I, blasted by the family feud, was no sort of Egeria just then. He told me so.

When my Workaday Heaven was quite arranged for me the poet read it to us in the little dark drawing-room of the cottage by the sea—to me and to Maleine—*con amore, sans façon*, tactlessly evincing his honest joy in his own work. He read it many times . . . the effect, intensely personal, vaguely metaphysical, was hypnotic. One came to regard the soft, effortless reading of it as if it were the solemn unwrapping of a cocoon, the close, gluey sheath being slowly unwound from a new-born soul in religion! The personalities of us three, all in sympathy, good Lord!—perfect or imperfect—were

merged. We criticised the poem, actually. We were all artists for the nonce, a man and two women in the strange, occasional solidarity that the mutual pursuit of art for the sake of art can give and maintain.

My poem, mine! "*To V. H. who asked me for a Working Heaven*"—so runs the foreword. "A Frivolous Heaven" would have been a better name, or "A Baby Heaven," or "A Doll's Heaven"—written to please me; to explain and to reveal, as the maker saw it, the truth. I had asked for it. I am brave. I sucked it in and the knowledge it conveyed to me like a potion. For this poem, when at last I got it rounded and complete, set the seal of verity on my surmises as to the nature of one at least of the varieties of amatory experience. I know now that there must be several varieties of this emotion, apart from Love itself, the Emperor moth, the Koh-i-noor—as singular and rare a manifestation as the aloe's blossoming or the building of the Taj Mahal.

"*God is a good man . . . God is a kind man. . . .*" A jolly, licensed publican of a fellow! My Poem turned out as profane a piece of work as Grimm's *Kinder Märchen* or the Bible itself at times. The introduction of earthly love into heaven could not but be profane according to the usual canons. . . .

And now for the varieties. The loves of the angels, and this was not quite it! The loves of the triangles, and this was certainly not it—not a straight line anywhere! The loves of the artists, and this, more likely, was it.

Of this variety there are sectional divisions—vegetable Love, which fills the florists and other nurseries, adjusted, as Tennyson says, "with anthers and with dust"; rococo Love; Queen Anne teacup Love; Love of the sponge that merely imbibes the moisture of amatory experience and holds it—God knows to what end unless it is a literary one, in solution eternally; Heine Love and Swinburne Love, which is the love of Nature. . . .

OUR COTTAGE AT SELSEY





The Heine Love—" *Du bist wie eine Blume* "—is, I think, implicit in this poem. Heine Love, which rises now and again, gracefully, to passion, as in *Ritter Olaf* but mostly homely, cynical, wistful. Not, so far as I could tell, the love that moves mountains, faces the seven deaths of boredom, but the mild, watery variety that, rather than attempt to move the thwarting mass of opposition, sits down in front of it and repeats the great word Agony three times, taking up all one line !

He read it out hastily, in a shyness that was almost shame, hustling off the enormous and useful word, and we were glad to come back to the " flannel beach " and the " long, red Rolls-Royce," and the little paper-shop on the *Place* of Lyon.

Love without breadth, depth, or thickness, without dimension. Subjective, purely. For the object—set up like an ikon to be worshipped, perfunctorily, with genuflections and lip-service, a queen in the game of knights and castles—any sort of fetish, glittering, shining, compelling, will do.

That was all done. She got ill and left us. In the autumn we made a pilgrimage to my native Northumberland, and I, taking my courage in my hands, bounced in upon Goneril. I walked into the bedroom of the little thing where she lay on her little bed, a little ill, and surprised her into almost cordiality. It did not last, however ; she told her daughter to give me a cup of tea downstairs and peevishly dismissed me, saying :

" Let the lawyers thrash it out ! "

They *were* thrashing it out, to the tune of hundreds a year, if that was what she wanted ! She was hopeless. I went back to Durham, where Joseph Leopold and I attempted, as usual, to amuse and entertain the kind Canon, grown older and more tetchy. We succeeded. He said that he never had " had such good entertainment

in his life." But though he was stout he was unstable as water. He cut me out of his will two years later and left all his money to his nurse and his pet verger—at ninety-six. Oh, these wonderful old men who live beyond the age of reason!

And when I got home my mother did not know me. I had only been away a week. She had bronchitis—the final touch, the mild finale of other more serious illnesses. Joseph Leopold shared the night nurse's duties, taking the first shift, sitting by her dressing-table, playing interminable patiences. The doctor asked me if I would permit of an operation . . . oxygen . . . it might preserve her life for a few weeks more. I told him that he must consult the family, as I dared not myself sanction the expenditure of three hundred pounds to the estate. Nothing was done. One morning my maid woke me at seven, putting her head in the door and saying:

"Nurse says Mrs. Hunt is very bad."

My mother had been a tall, large, wide-faced woman. As she lay there, breathing with difficulty: of a dull, ferocious red like a smouldering coal, she seemed a small, brown, wizened changeling. Her grey hair, matted and damp, had the effect of a black hood round her shrunken face with her mouth like a small, round O in it. The nurse had hold of her hand under the bedclothes. She looked at me and said:

"A hundred and ten! She's burning up."

She was on fire. It did not last more than a minute after that, and I went downstairs and sent Joseph Leopold to telegraph to Regan and Goneril. At half-past nine his mother came to me. At ten o'clock Regan came. I heard her pass upstairs. I sent a message to her as she stood by her mother's death-bed, asking for a reconciliation. There was not one. Oh, we Northerners!

At eleven o'clock my solicitor came and informed me that my mother's will had been put into Chancery. In

the afternoon I went to my mother's room and gazed at her in the shell. She looked twice the woman she had looked when she was dying. Her brow was even, her mouth closed and firm, her nose sharpish and determined. She reminded me of Mr. Gladstone, although I had never seen her look like that in life.

On Monday Joseph Leopold, his mother, and I stood—we were too restless to sit, and, besides, it would have been unbecoming to do so while such a thing as this was happening—and in silence we looked out of the window that gave upon the little garden and the street. It was Monday morning. The funeral was fixed to be at Woking on Tuesday. We were all to be at the London Necropolis station by eleven. All night she was to lie in a shed, chill, bare, and cold, in a chill, bare, and cold station . . . no bright advertisements . . . so that it would be handy for them to shove her to-morrow into the train that we were all going by. That would be the real funeral. But now the point was to get her there. A sort of a carriage like a black beetle, drawn by one horse, was at the garden gate. There was a noise on the stairs. We heard the front door opened, and observed a posse of men with their burden passing quickly down the garden path and out of the gate. The carriage went off at a cheerful trot down the hill. It was not the funeral, only getting ready for it overnight. . . .

“And that's that!” said Joseph Leopold, with no intention of irreverence. It was with him as with me—the sense of what had been a life bobbing away down the street like a cork upon the ripple of a stream, to be ready overnight for the ground . . . and the Then. . . .

By Christmas Day we were all, Ezra Pound—taking great interest in the cooking of a sucking-pig—Mary, Joseph Leopold, his nephew, and I, installed in a haunted cottage at Farnham Common which had been lent to me. I was poor. My mother's money, on which I had

lived and on a share of which, augmented by my earnings, I was to live in future, was not immediately forthcoming. It did not come for four years—a contested will . . . sisters of the same bed masquerading as strangers . . . heads averted . . . the sneer courteous . . . macabre scenes such as one reads of in Victorian novels. And my Aunt Jane still prayed for me while she prosecuted.

Mary had come back from Giessen, where she had been almost living at the Johns, with some very queer and disturbing stories. They were very nice to her—oh, always!—and she must be sure to come again; but there was some sort of situation. The captain had proposed and proposed and again proposed—extraordinary condescension for a German—and now was annoyed with her *da sie wollte nicht mein Frau sein*. And Walloth talked to her about Joseph Leopold's affairs. He dimly realised that gossip about Joseph Leopold would be a passport to her interest. He hinted vaguely at conspiracies—against the money of Joseph Leopold, of course—and he heard John say that he would jolly well make old Hueffer sweat, i.e. pay.

Mary didn't know—for Herr John naturally never spoke to a woman about business—that there *was* some actual estrangement between the two men. John had kicked against the delay in the despatch of the *last* instalment—so Joseph Leopold fondly hoped—of his payments. I knew that Joseph Leopold had received a paper informing him that a certain Paul John, of 1 Seltersweg, Giessen, had "posted" him for the sum of £80 in a London bank—made over his debt to the bank, so I understood. Joseph Leopold had written stiffly, enclosing a cheque—"hoping that this is your last charge against me."

*Cherchez la femme!* Mary was innocent as the day. Linchen was as *rusée* as they make them. She was very fond of Joseph Leopold, but, at the same time, resented

Herr Walloth's defection. Her husband was, on the other hand, *tant soi peu* jealous of her cult for the Englishman. She went with Mary every day to talk to the Rabichs and see to 15 Friedenstrasse, dust the pictures, attend to the window-boxes and put fresh flowers in the vases. Linchen had promised to go on doing it after Mary had gone until Joseph Leopold returned, as he must do, to fulfil the conditions of his naturalisation and do just what Dr. Westlake had said. Joseph Leopold had better put in a good six months more. The Rabichs were dying to have him back. He had given them leave to sub-let discreetly to some lady student at the University or nurse at the Klinik, but they had not chosen to do it.

The idea of the little German Frau, who, indeed, looked far more like a French governess, with her blunt mouth, sharp nose, and small eyes, pottering about the empty halls of the absent *Englander* amused me and explained much. It would not be odd if John, jealous, and disliking Joseph Leopold, getting as much out of him as he could in the money way, was not so particularly anxious for him to go back to Giessen.

But he just must. I was not any more the flesh-pots of Egypt to him, but he was amiably staying on in England neglecting his affairs in order to help me over the settling of the affair of my mother's estate. Though it bored him, hindered his work, brought him into contact with all sorts of disagreeable people, even though it broke him, he would stay to see me through. A quite fallacious notion! I should never be through, and, even if I were, it would not be with his help. He didn't help; he was like a dog in a game of skittles; he was even getting into mischief. . . .

I sent him back to Germany.

I was glad my mother was dead. Her "nice, quiet

book " had been a boomerang, and had returned to me. It had not even done for me what she had intended since it had been ordered that the money it earned should be paid into court. And it had got Mr. Byles and the journal in which he took such a pride into the most horrible hot water. For months I had watched that insect of a case crawling up the list in the *Telegraph*, and one day I looked at the list for the last time, it was down for hearing. And I had imagined fondly that I, I alone, might square it!

Absurd! My novelist's sagacity was deeply at fault.

I damned the Germans and all their works a hundred times a day. That comedy of jealousy in a little, obscure town in Germany, that three-cornered love duel which Mary had hinted at, was that going to stymie things over here in England? It could not be money. But, if it was, why hadn't I forced Joseph Leopold to be quick with his cheque, instead of dawdling till the anxious German gentleman had had recourse to such legal facilities as are at the disposal of foreign creditors? I was restless, because I wanted to get to Germany and see for myself what they were all about. Mary Martindale was going back, but not yet; there was no actual breach with the Johns. . . .

Joseph Leopold was coming as far as Boulogne to take me back to Giessen the moment the case was heard. It would be nothing.

But I did what Mr. Byles advised. He was less optimistic than I. I lunched with his chief one day at the Connaught Rooms, and I begged him over the luncheon-table to permit me and my social interests to be subordinated to the interests of the paper. I thought I was strong enough to stand it. My friends would kindly ignore any apology that he chose to insert. and put the matter out of their minds. But the objection, oddly enough, came from the editor himself,

unexpectedly on a high editorial horse. He wasn't going to deface his pages with apologies; it would be ridiculous. He was not much concerned with the amenities of my drawing-room existence, which was interfering with those of Fleet Street. Bless him, he wasn't responsible for the Birth, Death, and other certificates of Society ladies who wrote novels, and were lucky enough to be reviewed in his paper and share the sweet uses of advertisement with men who had their living to get by their tale of thousand words. And the expense of bringing over people from Germany might easily be as heavy as any possible damages that might be granted against him. The idea of his being fined for negligence in studying the dossier of everyone to whom he afforded a free advertisement! He didn't even know if his "sub" wasn't a ticket-of-leave man or a "clink."

What was I to do? His line of defence or absence of defence did not appeal to me. He refused to apologise.

I went about in that fog-bound February . . . seeing about my new book *The Celebrity's Daughter*, dipping into this or that lawyer's office, lunching with Mr. Byles and Mr. Comyns Beaumont; to parties at my three clubs; to stay with Mrs. Stringer. I was very "gay." . . . But it was all forced, a worthy affectation of indifference—indifference to the social result, perhaps, of this particular trial, for by that time, as the nurses say, I had been given something to cry for.

The nail of one sorrow is sometimes effective in driving out another, so I once wrote, apropos of some trifle, to Henry James—a speech rather near the knuckle of the life-problems of which dear Mr. James always so deprecated the discussion. Strangely enough, his sympathies had been then aroused, and he had riposted with his first invitation to me to stay with him at Rye, so that, with walks and talks, he might console me. But discuss

or even hear for what it was he was consoling me—not he !

And the next thing was—Postponed ! For a week ! And Joseph Leopold, torn from Germany where he ought to be, waiting for me at the Hôtel Dervaux instead ! I made a lightning dash across, taking my new book to show him.

A funny colony of English we made that night in the depressing lounge—British ugliness and French discomfort (i.e. no arm-chairs). With death in our hearts Joseph Leopold and I tried to wake them up and made them play games—French and English. To one stately lady who seemed to take an interest in me, I lent my new book. The Hôtel Dervaux was being remodelled. Half of it was under flapping canvas, and the draughts as you went to your room were awful. Joseph Leopold had caught cold already. He was very anxious to get back to Giessen, for he had been asked to dinner to meet the Grand Duke, and he wanted to keep up appearances and please the potentate who had been graciously pleased to accept him. I imagined Joseph Leopold spending summers at Nauheim in his train . . . wearing orders . . . court poet and what not—all sorts of local compensations for exile. . . .

Next day there was a telegram. One word, "*Tomorrow.*" And there was a storm, and the sea was raging and waves miles high. There was no need for me to go to England, but I thought I would. I waited till the last boat in case the sea went down a little, yet I didn't care very much what became of me. My going was just a foolhardy act that would do nobody any good, not even myself, but I didn't want to be done good to. I had a sort of feeling that the *Throne* defence would fail. Why—*why* couldn't they have gone into the thing properly ?

I sat there, wrapped up as well as I could be in a corner on deck, watching with intentness like a cat at a mouse-hole, the waters swirling backwards and forwards into the scuppers, to distract my mind. It was quite distracted enough. I could not even think of being sea-sick, lying crouched up on the bed—of roses—I had made. No, it was nails! *A la* Henry James!

My enemies, what were they thinking and saying? What doing? What further trouble was being manufactured for me? This affair would certainly start some more. And it came when I was more helpless than ever. Mary Martindale was all the sister I had, and my mother was dead. Joseph Leopold——

I stood all next day in the hall of his sister's house, my ear glued to the telephone. They brought me nourishment, and his mother lent me a smelling-bottle she had bought at Justus Christ's, the Giessen apothecary. About eleven o'clock my solicitor, speaking from court, asked me if I would let counsel watch the case for me as "dreadful things were being said." I agreed. I lunched with them all, and at five I went home, bought a paper, and read the evidence. It did not seem to me very fair or very true, but I believe that counsel are privileged to say what they like in court,<sup>1</sup> and reporters to report what they like, and printers to print what they like.

The next day the same procedure at Brook Green. That second day I had very little notion how things had gone, and, for some reason or other, I could not procure a paper as I went home. I sat still for a long time in the dark, in the empty dining-room at home, alone. . . . The servants, shamefaced, pretended they had not heard me come in, and did not come near me. I was afraid to know what had happened in the Strand, though if I had had a paper handy, I should have

<sup>1</sup> I am wrong; I am told that counsel are privileged to say, not what they like, but what they are instructed to say. Exactly.

looked. But I did not feel equal to going down the hill again to get one. Perhaps they were sold out? Perhaps the case was not over? I got into a rage there in the dark. It ought to have been somebody's business to tell me. I had friends there who must have known what I was feeling. Where were they all? In a sudden panic I turned on the light and flew to the telephone. It was six-thirty. Everybody I asked for seemed to be away. At last I got hold of the gentleman in the City who is kind enough, yearly, to put my income tax in order, as he was leaving his office. "You're wanted on the 'phone, sir." He must have been just putting on his overcoat and cursing the person who was retaining him. His first accents were irritable . . . then he apprehended me. . . .

"Is it left to me to tell you? . . . I am more than sorry. . . ."

His news must be bad ; I pressed for particulars.

Three hundred pounds damages ! Oh, poor Byles !

And then I realised that I had not for a moment supposed that the *Throne* would lose—not for one moment ! It seemed, on the face of it, rather absurd that a paper should have to prove its knowledge of all the recondite circumstances of a person's career before venturing to dilate on it. An editor of a paper knows no more of his clients than a man who is introduced to a woman at a dance knows whether she has a husband in the room or not—unless, indeed, he is sufficiently interested in her to ask, and then perhaps she amuses herself with not telling him the truth. Without having recourse to Stubbs, he cannot be sure how many times she has been convicted of forgery. Neither does *she* know whether *he* happens to be an undischarged bankrupt or no. This is socially speaking ; I am aware that beyond Temple Bar these things have a deeper significance. I have been told that a good many papers timidly

expressed this view, clothing, as Rabelais his unacceptable, rack-deserving political views in filth, in my case with ribaldry—"How happy could he be with either"; and another, "It now costs three hundred pounds to call this lady by the name she assumed"; or another, "A name? What's in a name? Heavy damages."

That night, slightly sleepless, I thought of many things—Might have beens . . . Panaceas. . . . But chiefly of the terrible incidence of money in civilised—or, if you will have it, decadent—human affairs. For savages delightfully settle their current sexual differences with clubs—or maybe a little poison. Fredegonda, the wife of Clovis, in Tadema's picture, painted when he was under the influence of the Pre-Raphaelites—a large, countrified, fine woman, her hard face crowned with red roses, her heavy eyes gloating on the figures of Galeswintha and Clovis standing hand in hand before the High Priest of the Gauls . . . boys swinging censers according to some savage rite or other . . . Galeswintha, the new love of Clovis. . . .

But the Loves of the Gauls are not practical politics. Money was not the weapon in those days, but the scythed chariot and the funeral pyre.

Well, it was Joseph Leopold's funeral, and it was not properly reported, anyway. Did someone really say, as I was told over the telephone that very night by one of the witnesses—poor, compunctious Maleine—that he had left his children to starve? That would hurt. The man would cheerfully have died sooner than take them away from a school of an opulence far beyond his means, where he had put them so that they should be brought up in the faith of their fathers and receive, as well as religion, the benefits of living in the highest possible state of social amenity.

I got a paper next morning and saw that in effect, the evidence must produce the other impression on the

minds of the jury. Counsel's words, as reported, did not give the word "starve," but do reporters always report? And I saw also that by the—shall I say the courtesy of the judge?—a protest *quelconque* had been got in. "All that was possible," since I was not represented.

Letters from my three clubs—natural enough! And one from a very old friend, Archibald Bence-Jones, Barrister-at-Law, putting me wise about the legal bearings of the verdict. I needed not to be down-hearted. Mr. Bence-Jones and his wife were Society people. He grasped, perhaps better than most, the implications of this trial, which might both alienate my clerical relations in the North and strengthen the hands of my enemies in the South. Why should Mr. Justice Avory—why should any Mr. Justice Anything—know that I was fighting for my life—since money is the life—with people who thought I was not entitled to the very means of existence! Even Mr. Bence-Jones did not know that. I did not worry Society or my friends with my legal difficulties—what decent woman does? And though he was not merely a Society friend, he realised the enormous importance of attacks on one's social prestige. I must not on any account let this sort of thing interfere with my heretofore butterfly existence. I must come to dinner next Thursday to meet Lord Fitzmaurice and Sir Lauder Brunton. Followed a list of useful, social, compelling names. . . .

You cannot count—that is, you cannot reckon—with the English synthesis of morality, but one must bear in mind that it is *Mr. and Mrs. Grundy*; that the great mind of England, male and female, thinks true and alike about those subjects. That is, it hardly thinks at all; it feels—a little. The English, taken all in all, are the most frivolous nation—that they are more frivolous than the Germans everyone perhaps would concede, but not, as I submit, that the English are a great deal more frivolous than the French. You never know the way

the cat bearing the standard of British virtue will jump. This frivolity is evidenced, I think, in the tons of volumes of cheap, shoddy memoirs of people really important, or important in their day, that are put upon the market every year and devoured by British readers who do not object to the life-history of a *cocotte*, supposing she is historical and robbed the nation, say, under Charles II, while Defoe's *Roxana*, the history of a common whore who flourished at the same time, lies *perdu* on local library shelves. Pious readers in France read, from paper cover to cover, a solid history of the Prince de Ligne or of the Duke de Broglie or of Benjamin Constant for which the authors have ransacked archives and public libraries, and have furnished copious notes. The French must read them, for they buy them. These books would be unsaleable in England, where they like "nice, quiet books," and memoirs of greatish men on whom the limelight must indeed play, but not too fiercely. It is desired, I have heard, by maiden ladies, to keep Rossetti, a poet, a paladin. . . .

Everything in England, especially feeling, it seems, can be reduced to terms of musical comedy. Crowds listen with tears in their eyes to that song, so cynical and touching, "If you were the only girl in the world, and I were the only boy." But she isn't and he isn't; he knows it and she knows it; and when the apple-cart upsets the courts are there to adjust matters. Why does Miss Sybil Thorndike's clever Joan—a concession to convention at the best—stir the English soul as Sarah Bernhardt's Jeanne d'Arc, grand, simple, quiet, and dull, so to speak, in the poor version she chose to play in, could never do? For Deep calls to Deep and no one hears—in England!

Why is George Robey, and why was Marie Lloyd, the darling of the people, except that this bastard passion, this casually touched sentiment, easily assuaged, appeals

to the heavy but frivolous *homme moyen sensuel*—and don't let us forget the *femme moyenne sensuelle*—that English men and English women are, detesting insistence, hating detail and all serious writing—scorning *le mot juste, enfin?*

Thackeray, commenting on the Englishman's conduct of his love-life, observed it. "When the Englishman gets off his knees he goes away." And when the Englishman goes into war he reads in the trenches *Comic Cuts* and *La Vie Parisienne*, while all the German officers have Wilde and Nietzsche in their pockets, the English wives at home reading Sir Philip Gibbs as against Henri Barbusse.

Well, never should I be able to make an Englishman think—as Henry James said a motor-car would do when it came!—at any rate think as I do and realise the point of Mr. Bence-Jones. For, as I have said, I believe the famous "fair play" notion to be just a mask for frivolity and an insane distaste of going into matters. The Englishman prefers to judge things "on the face of them," but the face lies. He takes what he calls an all-round view, and that is to say a partial squint at the problems which are past his comprehension, but have yet to be taken into account in the scheme of things. He is quite willing for the sake of sentiment as we all should be to let pass, throned in his Palace of Law, a Master in Lunacy, who cannot even see the faces of the litigants brought before him.

I had been before the old gentleman a week ago; he smiled benignantly, after having had papers read aloud to him and hearing the evidence of us all for about an hour, on a desert which he was pleased to call a peace. He was delighted, he said, as we all in the persons of our representatives sat round him, longing to be at each other's throats, but *reculant pour mieux sauter*, that the family dispute was ended.

But I had to go back to Boulogne and attend to my

invalid . . . mend him up and send him back to Germany, where his work was cut out for him. He must buck up and be practical . . . he must bustle John . . . get those papers. I didn't quite like what Mary had told me about the Johns. It sounded as if there might be all sorts of difficulties. Well, I must overcome them, and Joseph Leopold must do his part.

Next morning Mr. W. L. George and Maleine, who had been in court, came to see me, and Mary Martindale to accompany me to Charing Cross for Boulogne. Poor Mary was hysterical. She nearly collapsed at the station when she saw our portraits, very large, on the placards. I said stonily, putting half a crown into her hand, "Buy them all." It gave her something to do. I got into the carriage—there was only one place left—and bestowed myself, and presently Mary, her red lips trembling, her large white face like a rock with the rain running down it, came up bearing sheaves of papers, which she handed to me. I kissed her out of the window. She was going to live at South Lodge for a little while. She had no home now, except in Yorkshire with her aunt, Mrs. Stringer, who had lent her to me in my great need.

Then I opened the papers one by one, swallowed my gruelling, and digested it. Five people opposite me were reading papers on the back sheet of which was my portrait—the one by Hoppé. It was not in the least like me; Mr. Hoppé had considerably given them one for reproduction which would not give me away. I had sat to him about fifty times. At any rate, no one seemed to recognise me. Indeed, supposing I had been a wanted criminal, with police portraits posted up in front of every police court for my identification, I daresay I should, as my mother would have said, "got cannily away."

The train moved out of the station. I had not the face to read my own papers, and thus appose my likeness in the *Daily News* to another example of Mr. Hoppé's

talent in the *Daily Sketch*, read by the stolid man sitting on the other side of the carriage. My apparent non-recognisability struck me as quite a good tip for a story—a shocker—and I began to invent a plot. It might soothe me, and make me a cheerful companion to the person I was going to, more stricken than I, and who now had need of me. I was to be nursetender to the sore heart—sore about a variety of things . . . not about me any more.

Perhaps, like the wife of Richard III at the bier of her murdered lord, my face “was much abused with tears,” and unrecognisable. Mary had not done all the crying.

How should I tell him? Leaving his children to starve! That was what it came to. The rest didn’t matter much.

It was quite dark when I got to Boulogne, and raining. Joseph Leopold met me. I was too tired and too much upset to speak, nor did he as he put me into a carriage and we began to drive up the steep street to the hotel on the heights of the town. Then I found he couldn’t; he had lost his voice completely. The doctor had forbidden him to come out but he had done so and very much annoyed he was about it. I said I could have got up the hill alone. When I recovered and could talk I tried to tell him all about the trial, but he absolutely forbade me to, said he didn’t want to hear a word about it, and with lack-lustre eye, from his bed, sipped the soothing potions of Dr. Lavigne and watched me stow all the newspapers in the bottom of my trunk. The doctor came, and said to me in the passage outside that monsieur was not so very ill, but in such a highly excited condition that it had flown to his chest. He had been delirious, he said, last night. I had better not trouble him with *des affaires* until he asked to be so troubled. Let *him* start a discussion of anything unpleasant. I think Dr. Lavigne knew all about it. He could speak a little English, and probably read the Paris *Daily Mail*.

Next day I went down to breakfast—in this French hotel English tastes were catered for. The large, important lady to whom I had lent my new novel, just out three days ago, sauntered up to the table where I was eating my sole and laid the volume down on the table beside me.

"There's your book, Miss Hunt!"

She stalked away to her finnan-haddock, and it was Coventry in the Hôtel Dervaux until the doctor allowed us to go. And when he did let us go, it was to the South of France. "*Monsieur avait la poitrine légèrement atteinte.*"

I had never been farther south than Paris in my life before. It was the usual revelation to me. I hate revelations everybody else has had; every gambler with a system, every Jew with a fortune, every *cocotte* with her *saison à faire*, everybody with a chest, has known what it is to awaken in that early morning and see those cypresses and those goats . . . the blue waters of Cete and the flowers of Nice. We got to a quiet place called Montpellier which Conrad had written to recommend. Years ago he had written to Joseph Leopold from thence, saying it must be seen in winter and in January. This was February. He had raved—Joseph Leopold asserted there was no other word for it—like a miss or a schoolboy about the beauty of the land and the delicacy of the colours at sunset and sunrise. He had owned to missing Joseph Leopold more and more, for "with no other man" except the inheritor of the great Pre-Raphaelite tradition of colour could he share this rapture. Drunk with colour, he would have liked Joseph Leopold there to lean on. He had told me, when I asked him about Montpellier, of the villages perched on conical hills, standing out all round against "the great and weeping lines of violet ranges as if in an enchanted country," and that it was "magic, all subtle and of colour alone." I never had thought of Conrad as a potential colourist; he seems to me, in his work, to use

merely conventional terms of colour ; but that one phrase, " great and weeping lines of violet ranges . . . "

I fancy that he was impressed, as a child is, by the glories of a printed picture-book, in which chromatic shades have been lavishly used. And, at any rate, Montpellier was a wash-out, ugly and ordinary, memorable merely as the place where we lost our luggage. Joseph Leopold was forced to admit that Montpellier must have changed a good deal since Conrad's time ; it was the tamest of white places, and the violet ray at even conspicuously absent.

We went on to Carcassonne, where rabies was raging and all the inhabitants rushing up in droves to Paris for the ministrations of Pasteur. I was nearly bitten, my sympathies being too much with the dog, wild, maddened, chased down the street by a gendarme on a bicycle with a levelled gun. It snatched at my leg, happily long skirted, as it flew past to be killed at the next *carrefour* by a pitchfork that another blue-coated brigand, stationed there, flung at him. I had read John Galsworthy's story in the *English Review*—perhaps the dog was only being driven mad by agony ?

I did not get rabies from my scratch, though the dog star was raging. But I am under Scorpio, the star of artists and harum-scarum people generally.

I begged for our horoscopes up to date from my versatile doctor. Hopeless! Nothing good for either of us. Herschel in the ascendant ! Joseph Leopold's aspects " between the devil and the deep sea," and mine " not much better." " Oh, you Scorpio people ! " the dear woman exclaimed. But Scorpio people, though erratic, are sometimes lucky, and, anyway, we always fight the stars when they are against us.

The stars against ! I used to sit at the window overlooking the hotel garden and watch them in the cold clearness of the night, when the mistral blew the boughs

of the plane-trees like a ragged, jagged curtain, across the steely blue like the coat of a gendarme. No, there never is any help in the stars.

The soil of the hotel garden was like the bread of Provence, pasty, leathery, flaky, and unappetising. There were white cats hanging about at odd times there—sometimes one, sometimes three, according as they died or hid themselves in the brake to suffer—sitting with ridgy backs along the wall. The Plongeur, a Spaniard, threw them about the *plongeon* where he washed the dishes. Joseph Leopold wrote all day on the table in the study they had given him—the lid of the bath in the bathroom, “so seldom used.” He had a horror of the return to Germany, where I was egging him on to go. And yet he was not happy here. Can anyone be happy or beloved with the mistral blowing and the live leaves of litigation blowing in at every post?

Of my pending Chancery suit I did not like to think. Yet I did. I was as full of nerves as he. Nerves—the heart’s division! We forced a calmness that spoke less of emotion controlled than an utter atrophy of all the springs of feeling. We hardly spoke to each other that month as we walked or climbed. Les Baux, the city of the dead, depressed us immeasurably; the veritable Château d’Amour that I discovered left us cold as its hearthstone, open to the stars. He picked up a small, live scorpion among the ruins of the Presence Chamber, where the Courts of Love were held, while I collected the pieces of a glass jug, iridescent with age, period François Premier, in the kitchen midden of the Comtesse de Champagne. The small scorpion, no bigger than my little finger nail, lived to visit England and be interviewed by German professors.

I understood now what Conrad had said about the prevailing wind of Provence, warning me of its knife-blade of cold that seemed to pierce in between one’s

very vertebræ, telling me also that I should not altogether dislike it, though it had half killed him in "a not unpleasant, languorous, melting way . . . a gently active numbness." No, I did not mind it. But it did not inspire me as it seemed to inspire him. I was *not* "sunk in dreams—visions—of innumerable tales," or "floating in an atmosphere of voluptuously aching bones." So he had said. I rather approved of this wind's periodical visitations. For there seemed to be no dust-carts in St. Rémy or in Arles, or in Provence generally; the waste-paper baskets of the Middle Ages, unemptied, the sale or return newspapers, lie all round the walls of Aigues-Mortes. And if the mistral did not come sometimes and blow them away most of the towns of the Midi by now would be like Les Baux, where the air is fetid still, though there is nothing alive or even putrescent except perhaps in the museum, where lies, under a glass case, the Cabellodouro d'oro, the ever-golden, springing hair of a Provençal maiden that for many years, I was told, swung untarnished as the sign of the inn of that name till antiquaries rescued it.

Conrad wrote that he was jolly glad that Joseph Leopold had got on terms of inspiration with Provence. He could not tell Joseph Leopold how happy he and his wife were to know that their friend was at peace at last. In a little *cahier de vers* that Joseph Leopold sent him he thought he saw a sort of deeper vibration. Deeply interested in that something additional, he was yet glad to find Joseph Leopold unchanged. He himself was working at a novel laid aside some years ago. I think it was *Chance*. He said it was a beastly job, and he had no elasticity. He didn't care if it did well or not. He had been too long at the game, and was heartily sick of it. The feeling that life "is no longer worth the candle," but "altogether a beastly grind."

The old ritournelle! But Joseph Leopold's letters and

mine did, said he, cheer a man who had no longer "the consciousness of doing good work."

It was like old times to hear the jeremiad *d'occasion* that all authors put up now and again. *E pur si muove!*

I sent a little crate of oranges from the South to the father and mother and to the boy Jackolo, a whole branch of a cherry-tree, crystallised, fruit leaves and all, as it came off the bough in a mask of white sugar, like an early spring snow shower, from the shop of Justin Lilamand with the lovely name. They reminded me of the Cabellodouro d'oro—something that had been alive, now sealed in a tomb of glistening crystal. But not any more. Conrad wrote to say that Jackolo's teeth were in it at the time he was writing to thank me—the pathetic dark spray all dull and earthy once you break off its mausoleum. And I said that we were coming home, and he wrote that his first duty would be to present himself and make his bow in my drawing-room. He professed himself—Conrad! *Que d'honneur!*—extremely anxious to do so for the sake of the almost incredible sensation of duty combined with pleasure that would be his. "Never happened to me before." He didn't think it could be; "smacks of a fairy tale!" Well, he was going to live through it presently.

And my other mentor was not backward in reassuring me as to my reception. There was no collusion. They were, I fancy, hardly acquaintances. The sailors' toast—"Our wives and mistresses, may they never meet!"—would have suited admirably the respective *sommités* of Conrad and Henry James.

"To Grand Hôtel de Provence,

"St. Rémy de Provence.

"21 Carlyle Mansions,

"Cheyne Walk, S.W.

"March 7th, 1913.

"MY DEAR VIOLET,—Yes, I have been intermittently

and miserably ill—and have to write short letters in consequence. I am hoping I have really emerged a little, but everything is difficult yet. I am wintering and staying on in London on a more settled basis than for a long time back, and London is on the whole propitious to me. I am glad to gather that ‘abroad’ has practically been so in a still higher degree to you, in the sense, I mean, of promoting production, publication, impressions, and what comes of them. May it all be ‘blessed’ to you. If only one could arrive at climates without a big struggle towards them, I should emulate your great push southward. But I have to make the best here of rather a fine hang in that direction over the reeking, beguiling, romantic river. You seem to me to be in very pleasant places; I could do with them. I congratulate Ford on the intermission of his torture (for me it has been such) of blighted, frustrated work. Well, patch with purple if you must, so long as the piece holds.

“Yours, my dear Violet, ever

“HENRY JAMES.”

I patched furiously with purple, if my old friend would have it. I abandoned the part of Poor Miss Flite; I had played her for all she was worth last year and the part had cost me dear. The affairs of Joseph Leopold were, and of course they must be, of primary importance. This year I suppressed all my own disagreeable letters—letters relating to the Chancery suit that was going on full tilt, and letters from friends, kind and otherwise, with regard to his and my own recent appearances in the journals of the United Kingdom. I wished I could have suppressed the letters he got and all and every report in the papers. As a result, I am afraid, of one particular aspersion that had been cast upon him, his old, old friend, Mr. Marwood, wrote and demanded the

repayment of four hundred and forty pounds lent long ago for the purpose of defraying the costs of an operation in the family of Joseph Leopold. It was paid on the nail. I was aggrieved at the suddenness of the demand. He and I had talked of it at Sandgate, and he had said that he would wait until my ship came in. My ship had not come in, and his, though I did not know it, was going to cross the bar. Conrad explained it a little in a letter to Joseph Leopold—all about money, very businesslike, and ending with the cant phrase out of *Romance* with which this little crowd were wont to signify some degree of financial pressure, an abject condition of low water.—“Excellency, a few goats is the state of things here!” He mentioned that Marwood had nearly died that winter, and had been stimulated by this forewarning to put his house in order—a forgotten instinct which stirs sometimes even in the bosoms of Bohemia. And Marwood was not a Bohemian but a country gentleman, who had livestock and a farm and a wife, and was afraid of another illness which might finish him, said Conrad, trying to make me believe that his sudden rough usage of us was not the result of the recent case. But about that and other things Marwood had believed what was not, and could not have been. Of that I was sure, or he would have written to *me*, whom he made his pal, before he sent the formal demand to Joseph Leopold. Neither Marwood nor anyone who had ever known Joseph Leopold could, or should, have let themselves believe that he had left his children to starve.

They might very well have done that, for, tremendously agitated, oft weeping as only a German can, he could hardly manage to fulfil his literary engagements. The quality *must* suffer: continual jaggings tears the horse’s mouth, and the same treatment meted out to a human being produces “the blighted, frustrated work” of which Henry James feelingly spoke, so that even a visit to the

South of France, to Carcassonne and Corsica, and such "intermission of the torture" as is implied by these travellers' joys will not restore the tone—at any rate not all at once—of the grey matter on which so much—everything, in fact, for the writer—depends. It had seemed to me that my last job in life was to aid this precious substance to recover and find itself able to produce the tales of bricks—the pounds of flesh—that life, not to speak of honour and the clinging hands of children "whose crying is a cry for gold," demanded.

I have read some of the dreary work done by George Gissing down in a cellar in St. Giles's with not enough to eat, and I am sure it was not his best. Necessity, in the case of an author, is by no means the mother of Invention, and, together with "Endless Agitation," the wrong sort of excitement, the want of emotional lubricants, starves invention—which is imagination—drives fancy away from home, and love out of the door.

It was the accusation of neglect, which I for one knew was unfounded, that lay heavy on his soul. Uncontradicted perforce, of the nature of a privileged communication yet it was bound to foment his sense of injustice. Indirectly, of course, though it wasn't my fault, he laid it to me. He became what is called in society "a bear."

So, when the mad dog, rushing past me in the narrow street, pursued by the gendarme on a bicycle, gun levelled, bit at the hem of my white dress as I passed, he made no comment, nor did I. Not even when I nearly got lost down the old mine that the Romans used to build Les Baux with! It moved him not. We went to Corsica. He hated it. For, on the Sommet de la Paille, the highest peak of Vizza-Vona, he opened the letter he had been carrying about in his pocket for days, and found no apology—a demand for more money! *Quelle vie!*



V. H.



*Home again—The London Season—Selsey—A Book with Heart in it—The Papers—My Longing—The Rhine Boat again—Four of Us—Germany's Attitude—Queer—Difficulty in finding an hotel—Manufactured delays—Hermeskeil in the Eiffel—Concealed Army Corps—Shadowed—Metz—Arnold Bennett's Book Impounded—The Man on the Box—Backwards and Forwards across the Frontier—Joseph Leopold's Alternatives—"Fight against France or be shot"—Adieu Papers—Giessen my Canossa.*

HOME, and my yearly garden-party never so well attended. Cabinet Ministers, by Jove! Dinners in the House. *Fêtes champêtres* at the Monds' in Lowndes Square, Henley with the Harmsworths, the Cabaret Club and all the charming artist rabble who were on the top of the vogue, and then to the cottage we rented at Selsey.

A gorgeous season. I wished my poor old mother had been there to see it. I wished—what did I not wish? That Maleine was not there to see it, that the Beauty was . . . that Goneril still loved me . . . that everyone did not hate me!

Give a dog that bad name of commerce, and he becomes at least capable of small treasons, medium crimes and futile, forgivable stratagems.

I had now my preoccupation, something I wanted to pull off. It did not need money—at least, not much. It needed a journey, simply.

Joseph Leopold was very busy. He was writing a book—a very good book it was going to be; for it was going to contain something quite unusual for him; there would be "heart" in it. I was writing one of my novels, too, in which he always said there was too much heart—that is to say, sentiment. I talked of my plan in the

evenings. Joseph Leopold listened politely ; but then he always did. His attention was never any sign of interest. It was an old story, and even a new story grew old very quickly to him. He never did start a game, a book, or even a love-affair, that he did not lose interest in before he came to *finis*. Death ! He said it all came to a head then. He cultivated that curious *laissez aller* notion of shrugging off all to the last, so that, until a man lay on his death-bed, shriven and his peace made with God, he did not himself realise what had been his goal, his object in life, his heaviest sorrow, and eke which woman he loved the best. This idea, later on, when he was in the Army, he erected into a philosophy. And then, as with the heroine of the Laxdala Saga, it might easily turn out that " I did the worst to him I loved the most ! " These are the words that William Morris, the bluff saga-man, out of his profound philosophy that he got into the defence of Guinevere and of all women, puts into the mouth of Gudrun when she is old and her grown-up son questions her.

As for his books, Joseph Leopold knew perfectly well the place, as it were, where they broke their backs, where he lost touch with his idea or went off at a tangent and began to hurry up because he was so tired of it. He always wanted to tear them up when they were done. *The Good Soldier* had a very narrow squeak of it, but there was perhaps a good emotional reason for that. . . . I found the sheets that she had written at his dictation in the dustbin at the bottom of the orchard in a hundred pieces, and it took me a week to mend each one separately and send to a publisher.

These tags, these jagged finials of his life, loose-trailing into space ! Life, a series of affairs ! And one is left with the last affair on one's hands ! . . .

But I was different. I had finished *this*—there was *that*—and what I wanted now was to go to Giessen. The

Mastermans talked of a holiday all four together, and I suggested that we should go to Germany, down the Rhine in the Rhine boat, which I had done so often.

I painted glowing pictures of it—I could still glow. C. F. G. should study the workings of the Insurance Act which he had helped Mr. Lloyd George to inaugurate, and for which he was now perhaps bearing the penalty in unseatedness. We would go in September. Joseph Leopold would take tickets for the fifteenth.

Before we left England we went to see Maleine in a nursing-home. She had had a terrible operation. It was a bad send-off.

We all dined together on the fourteenth. Like the Irishman, who got up at eight and thought it was seven, and found it was nine, we discovered, when the coffee was going round, that we must start to-morrow instead of the day after, so I spent the rest of the evening packing.

The striped roofs of Rotterdam again, the tranquil pastures of Holland . . . Emmerich, the German frontier, dinner there. Plenty of occupation on board ; a lovely young English girl being taken back by her sprightly mother to school in Mannheim . . . we fraternised. We all got off together and dined at Cologne, and watched the noble family of Stollwerck spreading themselves all over the plush-covered lounges of their Hotel Ernst, dressed up to the Paris nines, and their proud pulpy noses sticky with natal chocolate. Their young men, in a casual manner, held them embraced. They were stout, and their dresses were made of filmy georgette, the newest thing . . . their lovers' large spatulous hands sank in. . . .

But it was not the same. Germany and the Germans were the same, but their attitude was different. The German temper was queer, as we found out the first time we landed. I should have called it sulky. I was myself

inclined to be sulky, and had declined absolutely to get off at Assmanshausen, where we had stayed two years ago, and see if young Mr. Garnett's tortoise had arrived and was now a grandfather. I had made us all decide to get off, leave the boat finally, at Rüdesheim. At Düsseldorf Joseph Leopold took the others ashore to show them the industrial sights of Duisberg and Essen, while I went on with the luggage, alone, to take rooms at Rüdesheim. No one waved at Boppard, but I promised myself a visit to Mimi later.

I had the most unheard-of difficulty in finding a nice hotel. Every hotel seemed to be full—certainly all the nice ones that had been recommended. I secured some rooms, which I fondly hoped would be temporary, in an unpleasant barrack kept by a Dutchman, and waited for the others.

Indefinable, the feeling of estrangement! After I had eaten something—flavourless, almost thrown at me—I walked about on the road between the terraced hotels and the rushing Rhine. I did not love the Rhine any more. It did not seem to belong to me. No one welcomed me. Nothing tangible, of course; hotel-keepers always have an eye to their money; but it wasn't the Germany of two years ago, with its funny little harvest of "Tags!" that met one at every turn, in every shop, from every village child, from every labourer or beggar on the road. They were dour two years ago; they were sulky now—the very slightest difference, but it told on me with a sense of impending doom. On the opposite banks the German forests lay that I had so gloated on before . . . silent, secret thickets, stretching all the way to the frontier. . . . Once an army had gone through them, gone over them somehow—hundreds of army corps forty years ago on their way to victory at Sedan.

The moment C. F. G. arrived, he disclosed his imperative desire to see the battlefields of Sedan, of Gravelotte

and Mars-la-Tour. And, of course, we wanted to see them too. But it took us three days to make a plan. There seemed to be extraordinary difficulty in getting about. The landlord—I have said he was a Dutchman, by the way—was sour and unenterprising. Joseph Leopold spent an hour or two in looking out trains. It would take a day. And there was a fine new line just opened all the way from Posen to the frontier, and, of course, Sedan.

The landlord, his feelings assuaged when he found that we were only going for the day and that the arrangements for the excursion might be, more or less, in his own hands, became more helpful. There was an *Aussicht* in the Eiffel, the first stop of the new railway, Hermeskeil. Joseph Leopold knew all about it. An altar to Hermes eminently worth seeing was there. The place was wild and savage; up till now it had been inaccessible to tourists. We might get lunch. He would procure a carriage.

Late next morning—nearly too late for the train from Bingen—a carriage was in front of the gate. There were two men on the box, and one looked rather like a policeman. Nonsense, Joseph Leopold said, he couldn't be. The coachman was just giving a friend a lift.

Up hill, through the woods, to this village that had only recently been opened up. It looked it—as if its eyes were hardly unclosed, like an untidy, tousled, German baby awakened by an English nurse and very much surprised! Probably, up here, in the very heart of the Eiffel, it had never looked on an English face. And unkempt! Wet, yellow straw was caught straggling all over the stones in front of the inn—loose, and coarse, it was pashed into dun-colour by the hoofs of the oxen and spread by the webbed feet of the geese all over the roads. "Why, it's all midden!" I said.

But we got a delicious *Mittagessen*, and then the men

went out and looked for the Hermes Fountain, waiting till the train should pass that was to carry us to Metz. When they came back they told us that there was no sign of Hermes or his fountain, but that they had discovered and located two separate army corps round about this unimportant village, whose brand-new station was, therefore, not too big for the entrainment of such numbers of hefty men to be despatched straight across to the frontier. And the man who had sat on the box of our carriage got into the train with us, as I pointed out to Joseph Leopold, who told me not to mention it to C. F. G., who was beside himself with delight at the idea of seeing the battlefields. It had been the dream of his life. So was I—excited to death.

At Metz we got out, and passed through the town to a sort of dépôt, where the Dutch landlord had telephoned for a carriage to be ready to take us to St. Privat, the first of the holy places we were to see. On our way to look at the ugly, smug, red Cathedral, we were happy to be able to oblige a forlorn French party of sightseers with change—they were suddenly confronted on their travels with the problem that French money would on no account go down at Metz. Waiting about, I saw the luckless President of the Immortelles, as they called him, and was reminded—as one is, by fits and starts, everywhere in France, as well as by the rustling of the withered flowers rattling round the statue groups on the Place de la Concorde—of the slogan of the Lost Provinces: "Give us back our Provinces! Give us them!"

Well, they have got them now and a little bit more!

This strange, predestined, romantic apparition in knee breeches and buckled shoes was hurrying down the shady side of the street, his wide, black satin cloak flaring out to the wind, all the rest of him in mourning for the ancient loss. The Society was pledged not to wear any but a sable garb until the restitution, if it ever came.

He was the first person to be killed when the armies of Germany occupied Metz.

We waited over an hour for the fly, all four of us, standing by a wall on which we propped our books and read. Joseph Leopold had Arnold Bennett's new book, which the author had sent him. I had a copy of my new one, titled *The Desirable Alien*. Suggestive names both. And when the carriage came the same man was on the box. Schooled, I said nothing.

We were forced by fussy custodians to give our attention to the magnificent building that Germany has erected in order to house a quantity of shards of brass, of bloodstained rags on which are discernible faint lines and patches of sodden galoon that once meant rank and honour. And buttons! I never saw so many—all alike. And this disintegrata of heroes is disposed under glass cases so as to keep the dust off what lay under the unwinking sky for days in 1870, pulped by wind and rain till ranks were levelled and the gauds of officer and private, padded into undistinguishableness. Nothing like it anywhere, 'this parterre of heroes' "cast-offs!" The toad-like, flattened, humble horror of it recalling perhaps the rag-picker's yards one sees going west by train out of Waterloo, or the greasy, trodden, undistinguished detritus of a rainy Bank Holiday on the Heath. . . .

And then, having looked reverently into some of these glass cases and asked a few questions and offered a few regrets, we were left alone to wander at our will. We wanted most to see the scene of that so oft-painted picture, the Church of St. Privat, crowning the long slant of the hill up from the west that the handful of French and their poor paper-soled boots held for quite a time against the might of Germany, sturdy, young, efficient and fully equipped—so long that it began to seem as if the day might be theirs. For hours Germany drove

and flung one brave battalion after another against the brow of the hill, like waves against a pebbly ridge. And all to be mown down, as they came on, by the French handful in their so superior position.

The Germans were buried in heaps, more or less as they fell—after the ghouls of the battlefields had picked out such poor valuables as were to be found—under low, barrow-like mounds, all alike, of the same size, but a little apart. They are there, neatened every year by the gardener's scythe. These mounds, like a pattern slightly raised, in different colours, of a shade greener than the earthy groundwork, came to represent to my eyes, dazzled by tears, each a little clump of lives, desiring desperately, every one of them, to breast the hill and be at 'em—an Army of mounds! Dunsinane! That was what made me weep. Defeated endeavour! What though the last clump succeeded, entered St. Privat, and put the little garrison of the church to the sword? Death got the first clump and more than the first.

And all the trappings—braids and tabs and discs, distinguishing marks of the doomed lads who had swarmed up so gallantly to their deaths—lying level beneath the dome of this pious building, in receptacles padded, glass-lidded, formed a subsoil of an outrageous similarity. No matter. At least, moth should not gnaw these rags or dust dim these relics of a great moment till the Judgement Day—or, at any rate, until the French get to Germany.

The sympathy of England in 1870 was with Germany. Read Carlyle: "Brave, patient, reasonable Germany; peevish, vain France!" And I have a letter that the grandfather of Joseph Leopold wrote to my father all about the tiresome, flippant French, which was an odd letter for Ford Madox Brown to have written, since he had French blood in him as well as Scotch and Welsh.

But he had no Irish blood and no sense of humour. Joseph Leopold, of course, inherited all these strains and imported the German element.

We got into the carriage again. The coachman was in haste to get us back to Metz. He said so, and spoke of the danger of missing the train. That was pure nonsense. C. F. G. wanted to drive about on to French territory, a little way. He said so. *Tableau!* But it didn't matter what the coachman thought. We drove. C. F. G. had a map of the old frontier and the new. The frontier had been "rectified" by the victors in a passion of commemorative spite. Nothing would serve them but it must be arranged so as to take in all the clumps, every mound in which a German's body lay, and there were many larger tumuli dotted about as well as in this mile-long field we had been surveying. No Frenchman must possess, or be able even to walk over, the ground that covered a German. The Fatherland must be increased to fit this proposition. And a line of frontier like a wriggling snake, whose every convolution would take up about a hundred yards, was the result of this arrangement.

The driver made objections, but we intended to have our way. It was our carriage that we had hired, and we were going to pay him—unless he disobeyed us. A sensible German realised that we had a perfect right to drive where we liked, having once chartered his carriage, and he had to give in. A nod from the other man on the box beside him!

But, indeed, he did it very funnily, in order to plague us—driving like a snail over German territory, and whipping up his horse and shaking us to bits when we happened to be on French. We held the map on our knees and roared with laughter. When we got into German territory again he was placable, and showed us the very place where the German Emperor stood with

Moltke and Bismarck, watching through their field-glasses the last decisive charge of the Germans up the hill, steep as an Alp, of Gravelotte. I climbed it with Joseph Leopold. It was pretty stiff.

And when we got out of the carriage at the station, whence we were to go straight back to Bingen for Rüdeshheim, we couldn't find either of our books that we had brought to read in the train. We were late for the train because, as the driver had said, of our silly divagations backwards and forwards over the wavy frontier. Yet the train was still in the station. The kind, considerate, German stationmaster had actually kept back the train for us ten minutes. The express from Metz to Posen—it was like keeping back the Flying Dutchman or the Riviera Express.

I talked of us all going to Boppard, and I would see Mimi to-morrow, but Joseph Leopold said I must not think of it, for we must get away from here—if, indeed, we were allowed to get away. He was frightfully pessimistic. The police had it always in their power to make difficulties—futile ones, perhaps, not letting us go, say, till they had read through the two seditious volumes we had had about us and that they had impounded. That man on the box was a detective, of course. My new book—all about Germany! The title, too. . . .

It might be all nonsense, but he'd rather not risk further incursions into Germany till he and I were alone again. He would rather not take the responsibility of letting an English Cabinet Minister be hung up here.

All I had heard and read of the Secret Service came into my mind. Germany all at once became *fremd* to me, as it were the scene of one of Walter De La Mare's poems. The silence of the forests where we walked at noonday was now rife with furtive coming and going . . . full of the sound of hoofs, of pursuers' shouts, of horse-men—in Prussian uniform—riding up to the door and

knocking, stamping under the starlight . . . asking for people to be given up! Little tame Giessen a danger-spot, the flat there entered, and, once the good Rabich terrorised (I could believe no harm of him), ransacked for papers on intelligence furnished by those who all along had been, not hospitable, but inimical. And I had been engineering plans for him to go back there that he might one day be brought out into the Platz, where I had so often seen them exercising, and be shot. . . . A little platoon, rifles levelled against the square sheet of white paper pinned on the breast to mark the heart—tidy people even in murder! And it wouldn't be murder; it would be justice. He had asked for it.

Insensate fear clutched me, made me want to make a dash for the coast and a sight of the cliffs of old England, to have the sea between us and Joseph Leopold's compatriots whom I had been prepared to learn to love.

He soothed me. We were all right. We had some of the might of England with us. We had better, however, be getting home. We had been behaving rather incomprehensibly. That driving of yesterday backwards and forwards across the frontier must have been most puzzling to our coachman and would give him to think the worst. You couldn't expect a German peasant's mind to cope with those of members of the English intelligentsia. Of course, what they had been afraid of was that we should all get out in French territory, give them the slip, and they'd lose us whom they had been shadowing so carefully!

But, I wondered, were we at all valuable to them? And he replied with a shrug that it looked like it, since they had actually stopped a train for us—a State train, too! "I wonder who the deuce they think C. F. G. is? The English Prime Minister, perhaps? I'll write to my cousin Wilder—he's a Hueffer—in Holland to

send me a paper. They get all the German scandals there before they even know them here."

I said, "There are plenty of Dutch papers downstairs. But, even then, I don't see what it all means—this following and shadowing."

He succeeded in giving me a shock. He was good at it. First he went very quietly out of the room, came back again, and, standing up beside my desk in the military attitude of attention, said:

"It means me—or War."

Him, then! His life! That was it. The knocking at the door—the search—the compromising papers. . . . The terror all came back again.

But he was One of Them all right. What could they do to him?

Of course, one knew perfectly well that there was to be war—war some day, not yet! I remembered the overturned wheelbarrow left carelessly, as if it might be wanted soon—the very next minute perhaps—on the truncated embankment at Malmédy, and Emile Guillaume's words. But how if France were to be the aggressor? What price the wheelbarrow then? Joseph Leopold, earlier in the year, had certainly thought so, the fruit of many conversations with Monsieur le Capitaine Taste, Lieutenant de Garnison of the —Regiment at Perpignan, who shared our table at Jordy's Hotel in the Cité de Carcassonne.

I had often watched, fascinated, standing in the icy, snowy, spring weather on the cobblestones of the street near the east gate of the city, something just like a sortie—a party of soldiers coming in from the chase. I, an arrant civilian, never know what the military can be doing. It was worth while standing there, getting one's feet wet, in the fall of the light, watching to see suddenly over the old grey stone parapet the red jerkins and shining

helmets of little troops of soldiers on horseback, riding in over the peaked bridge into the city. With a slight exercise of imagination I could construct the scene of a whole poem of William Morris's—the chill, black wold outside the Pale, dappled with patches of retreating snow, the red against the white, the firm-lipped, determined faces of the men in their casques, a white girl captive slung across the saddle . . . and hear the clink of the bridles . . . no one daring to notice . . . the down-trodden inhabitants of the *cit  * used to the marauding ways of their defenders. Then they would go over the drawbridge into the great square donjon looming strong, stony, in the dusk . . . and the early dark would close over us all on our castellated peak, in the plain that Carcassonne is.

I told Le Capitaine Taste that I wanted to see the castle inside, and he took us there and introduced us to the Commandant and his Adjutant, a boy with rosy cheeks who had been in England and who just adored cricket. They asked us in, and showed us all round and made much of us. Charming people, but still a cold centre of revenge, hatred, and sense of the absolute necessity of feeding it, was implicit in all they said and all they hinted and all they showed us. In the room where they dined the vast, bare walls were hung with tattered banners—banners taken in a hundred fights, bearing names well known in military history. I cannot remember the names, but none of them were German. But on the north side there was a gap—one banner was gone! Some words, very clear, were chalked up in its room: "*A Potsdam!*" And underneath: "*N'oubliez pas!*"

This legend of the lost banner and its whereabouts was chalked up afresh every day. They *must* go soon and fetch it. They talked of nothing else. They had their *Tag*, too. And isn't Potsdam just beyond Berlin?

The boy who had been in England spoke to me as if I must be in sympathy. . . .

Joseph Leopold would be like a dog in a game of skittles if it ever came to that. And suppose it came—*Der Tag*, that both Germans and Frenchmen would rejoice in—while he was in Germany? He was watched now, as he said—yes, he was certainly shadowed. Only the other day we all four had been walking in the woods, and were tired and wanted some tea, but had not seen any likely place for a long time. Lucy and I had volunteered to leave the men, who were fairly content with smoking, and see if we could find a place. Presently we thought we had come upon it—a biggish house of red brick in a clearing among the trees. Very true, it was a house—that is to say, a barracks, not a mile from the town where there was one already. Lucy's purpose wilted, but I went boldly up and asked the sentinel on guard at the gate-house if he could tell me of a place where we could have tea. The sparrow among the hoofs of the German army! Just then Joseph Leopold and C. F. G., having got tired of waiting, appeared at the other end of the clearing. The sentinel looked disturbed, and an officer, I think, in uniform came up and spoke to me quite severely. I propitiated him, and he sourly indicated to me a place where I could get what I wanted.

It was a very nice place and a very good tea, but the man who had given me the indication was sitting beside us, presumably picking up what we said. He didn't hear much. Joseph Leopold had shut me up with a kick under the table and Lucy was always discreet. Yes, it was a fact. We had never, since we got off the boat which we had boarded in Holland, taken a step unaccompanied in Germany, as Joseph Leopold pointed out to me. But I did want to see Mimi, and pleaded for one more day on the Rhine, and then we could all go to Giessen.

He said languidly :

" All right, dear."

I felt that there was something uncomfortable about it, something not quite final, and repeated my request later in the evening.

Then he said, still more languidly :

" Do you want me to be shot or forced to fight against France? If you're prepared to risk that, dear, we'll go."

He found a Dutch paper downstairs—or did Alfred Wilder send it to him?—and there was a paragraph about the Renegade who was escorting the English *Raj* all over Germany. " We Germans," polite, stopped our trains for him, showed him our monuments, let him go back to his land and tell the effete, women-ridden English what the Germans did for him to show him courtesy. " Him " was Winston ! . . .

They thought it was Mr. and Mrs. Winston Churchill we had trailing about Germany with us !

So the dream-Giessen faded out and the dream rencounter with Herr Paul John. But Joseph Leopold wasn't going to broadcast his dislike of fighting France that he had just expressed to me. He just took the M.'s to Coblenz to show them his country's proudest possession, Ehrenbreitstein, travelling by rail for quickness, while I to practise my German took all our luggage to Spa. Joseph Leopold when I parted with him was like a cosmopolitan stone. . . .

And when Mary wrote she made me think that Joseph Leopold would not have got much out of the Johns, anyway. Paul John was turning rather nasty. Paul John had troubles of his own. She thought that Joseph Leopold, with her love, had much better stop away from Giessen for the present, till their panic had died down. For Paul John had been frightened for his money—at one time. Then he had "posted" Joseph Leopold

and been promptly assuaged. Mary said Paul John considered Joseph Leopold far too frivolous, and had not liked his constant sky-larking, dashing about in motor-cars to Homburg *et céans*, just on the very days that the burgomasters of Giessen elected to go and call on him. Was he a person likely to be regular with his rates? *Ach, nein*—altogether too French for a German! The nice judge to whom Joseph Leopold used to give English lessons was rather “off” him now, and disposed to think that he would *not* be an ornament to Giessen. Not dissipated, of course—that would have been better, because it would have shown him to be harmless politically. Just what Joseph Leopold himself had said! He was like poor Cassandra, able to prophesy for everybody’s advantage except herself. It was Mary’s humble opinion that Joseph Leopold had better keep away from his flat for the present, for he would get nothing out of John just now.

Come off it, both of us! That seemed to be that!

Germany had been my Canossa, fatal to me. I had never liked Germans, never felt at home with them. I hated them, in fact. I was not going to present Giessen with a pump or leave my bones on the Schiffberg. I was going to leave my life there, perhaps, which is another thing.

*War conditions at Selsey—The Boys—Second Grim Determination—"England shall have my old carcass"—A Commission—Joseph Conrad congratulates Joseph Leopold—To be his Executor—Borys Conrad—Lelöf, Conrad and the Field Glasses—Joseph Leopold in training—James for England—James's Mistress—His Friend Rupert Brooke—His Death and Henry James's—Wilfred Ewart—W. H. Hudson—Plane Trees and Pigeons—A Future Life—His Unbeliefs—Dorothy Widdrington—Lunch at Whiteley's—My Premonition Realised—Happenings in Kilburn—Broadwater Cemetery—"The Return of the Chiff-Chaff."*

WHEN war broke out I could not help remembering that I had lent Lelöf a beautiful pair of field-glasses with which my father had aided his short sight to pick out the peaceful details of cottage roof and harbour light and the perplexing rigging of merchant ships at Whitby. I dreadfully resented the notion that this cranky Prussian officer would be using them to pick out our brave boys—the boys that I entertained and played hockey with at Selsey where we lived during the first year of the war, planting useful vegetables in our garden, renewing our incandescent lamps that the great guns of Portsmouth in their practising, shattered into fragments, and hardly daring to open the front door to let out a cat, much less let in an officer. That was as near as I thought the war would ever come to me. But it came to be Joseph Leopold who wanted those glasses, Joseph Leopold who stung by the sight of those very boys going to be killed, made up his mind to offer his "comparatively" old carcass. He forfeited his hard-won nationality, swore allegiance to King George, and took a commission in the British Army.

The thing was sprung on me. I went up to meet him from Selsey, on his returning from town, where he had been to take some copy to Buckingham House, allotted to the Ministry of Health. Oddly named, since it was there men of good will sat all day considering how best to deprive people of it. I waited at the station gate in the shrouded darkness of the car. A man I hardly seemed to know though I knew his coat, with a *serviette* full of papers under his arm, got in beside me and said dryly, in incisive, biting tones that were strange to me, as his secretary got in after him and covered his speech a little :

"I have got my commission."

Later, when I was lying on my bed crying :

"It is a grim determination . . . the second in my life. The first was to get you."

And it was just as it had been at Bittong's that evening long ago—only four years since—when he had returned from Giessen and, over the dinner-table, had announced his "grim determination" to remain behind in Germany. Weak natures only progress like this—by sudden leaps and bounds. Then, as now, he sheltered behind the presence of a third person that precluded cross-questioning. For, when he told me this dreadful news his secretary was there and I could not even take his hand. But that was perhaps what he wanted. "White hands cling to the bridle-rein: Red lips tarnish the scabbarded steel. . . ." We rolled along the twisted road from Chi' to Selsey, to the village that was trying to get rid of him because he was a German, and he was carrying the King's Commission in his pocket !

*"George, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King . . . Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India . . . To our trusty and well-beloved Ford Madox Hueffer, Greeting. . . ."*



THE GOOD SOLDIER



*"Given at Our Court of St. James in the fourth year of Our Reign."*

Joseph Conrad wrote to Joseph Leopold to wish him luck, full of fellow-feeling as another Englishman who was going to devote his own son. "*Mon cher . . .*" "everybody who knows you" will appreciate "the inner value of your action." *Ces gens de métier* understand each other. And Joseph Conrad loved Joseph Leopold. He understood what an enormous change the step his friend had taken must entail on his mental habits. That was how he put it, and it was easy for me to see that he thought Joseph Leopold's writing days were over. I thought so too, and that he had done his fair war-toll for forty-two—two propaganda books in six months. I had cried for three days, and I think, I hope, that this theory of mine dictated my tears . . . and my shameful contumacy. I could hardly bear even to help to make arrangements, but I did write to Conrad to ask him if he knew anything about some field-glasses that Joseph Leopold remembered "knocking about at the Pent Farm."

Yes, Conrad remembered them, but age, and some help from Jackolo, had long since "resolved them into their primitive elements." And they wouldn't have been good enough. They were his watch-keeping glasses, just sufficient to pick up a ship's lights at night. Joseph Leopold would want something that would be more efficient. Conrad's boy had left to join the Grove Park Dépôt of the A.S.C., and his father had never seen him look so happy. If anyone ever saw the portal of the seventh heaven open on this earth it was that boy, he said, and added that he shuddered at the recollection. In about a fortnight young Borys found himself attached to a heavy Howitzer, so his next letter was positively incoherent with joy.

They all were—the “boys”—dash it! Borys, seventeen, Joseph Leopold, forty-two—both as happy as kings.

Mr. Conrad sent me *Victory*, announcing that it was doing well. Positively he didn't care a damn whether it did or not. He had been too long “at the game” (of letters), and was heartily sick of it. Did I remember that phrase out of *Salamambo* about Mathô, when she had tortured him? “*Et le malheureux marchait toujours.*” He would write till he died.

He did, and I think that Joseph Leopold, who began so many tales and stories with him, ought to have finished the one he left. No one else would know by instinct and habit how he had wanted it to end.

Conrad accepted, with the desire that he might never be called upon to exercise it, the trust that Joseph Leopold intended to repose in him—that of carrying out his last wishes. He was honoured by it, though he thought that “Violet by herself,” would be eminently fit for the charge Joseph Leopold wished to entrust to both. And he was going soon to ask me for “a good slice of afternoon,” and hoped that I was as well as it is possible to be when one's world is heaving under one's feet, causing a sort of “moral sea-sickness.”

Those slices of afternoon were memorable because it showed me that the “moral sea-sickness” had produced some such striking *revirement* of judgement and theory as when the eyes of a man, under strong or physical emotional stress, seem to turn in their sockets. The literary eyes of Conrad were looking towards idealism. To make anything of it “in our sense,” his, Joseph Leopold's, and mine—a flattering conjunction!—he fancied that it was nowadays necessary to fling the very last dregs of realism overboard. Nothing “forced” would do. He admitted the inclusions of here and there a technical phrase, than which there is “nothing more suggestive.”

From Joseph Leopold, a simple soldier, training at Tenby, a veritable babe in arms, swimming with his wrist-watch on and other childishnesses, went a letter which pleased the older man mightily. He told me that he was touched to see that Joseph Leopold did not discard their common past. He admitted that these old days may not have been very good days, as they should have been. "But to me, my dear, they are a very precious possession." In fact, he had nothing else that he could call his own. Had Joseph Leopold put them aside in his "more fortunate Present" his friend would have felt distinctly the poorer for it.

Joseph Leopold's fortunate Present! Route marches, urgent drills, getting up at six, training for the chance of being killed! It was the war-fever, and all men of good will, even authors, shared it. Conrad never rested till he got a war job of his own, not unattended with danger.

And 'Enery! The way these authors came up to time! Henry James, gouty, dyspeptic, short-sighted, could do nothing—but he did that magnificently! He had moved into a flat in Chelsea, started a brougham, and entertained the British Army in the widest sense of the word. Drawing-rooms interested him no longer. Peggy, a niece, was living somewhere round about, the daughter of his brother William, author of one of the most widely interesting, most psychological of books, the material of half a dozen novels buried in accounts of the varieties of religious "dopes"—for so he seems to me to envisage them, but most reverently. His brother, Henry, had never talked religion; he now talked Army, thought Army, and died Army—quite suddenly!

No one expected it. Like little Miles, I think the great man's heart broke because of another apparent turpitude—because America was so slow coming in.

"He is dying, madam!" the porter at 21 Carlyle Mansions said to me one evening when I went there, not

expecting to see him, but to enquire after a slight cold that had been announced. "A little set-back," said the lady of next door, who came down the stairs from his flat and asked me to go in to tea with her. There was no need for me to ring, for she had been right into the flat and had "seen Peggy." He *was* ill, indeed, but that very morning the doctor had given them all fresh hopes. . . .

And yet, before the morning, I had lost my "trustworthy, rusty Henry James."

Which of them killed the Premier British Subject—Germany or America? Germany murdered Americans in the *Lusitania*, but America only came in after murdering her own Henry James with her delays. He did not live to see the two reconcilements, but in England there was surely more joy when Henry James came over than if even President Wilson himself had repented. By the time Henry died we had got used to thinking that was impossible, and doubtless Henry was no more optimistic than the nation to which he now belonged. I had asked him, using the pauses to which he had, as it were, trained me :

"Why, Mr. James, precisely, did you do it?"

He answered, "My dear Purple Patch, chiefly because I wanted to be able to say *We*—with a capital—when I talked about an Advance."

I suppose that, during those last few months, he said *We* so hard, took the affairs of *Us* so much to heart, that it gave him the stroke from which he died. Paralysed he was, all up that side that leaves the brain comparatively free.

Henry James could not legally belong to two nations at once, like Joseph Leopold, but I was never allowed to forget that *We* included the French. I shall never forget his rage when I told him of how Mrs. Fisher (Adrienne Dayrolles), who had played for him in *Guy Domville*,

had been lunching with some ladies of the English upper classes who were doing all sorts of war work, and doing it very nicely, too. They were bragging of "our men" at Ypres, justly enough, but one of them, less British than the others, had sufficient detachment to observe the angry dismay of a Frenchwoman whose countrymen were being quite unconsciously left out of this pæan. With the high courtesy of her race, and it is to be feared some of its stupidity, she put in a word for Mrs. Fisher's benefit, saying, with a note of flippant patronage, "And the *French* did very well, too!"

He boiled. I boiled. We boiled together. That kind of thing happened too often, and Henry James's sympathies, if anything, were rather more with the country that had produced Flaubert, the original seeker of *le mot juste*, that now old-fashioned slogan. The war has killed *le mot juste*. But the uses of his sympathy naturally fell to the country of his adoption—"Anything I can do, anything I can write!" No war appeal went unregarded; he even allowed himself to be interviewed. The chaste Henry! He ceased to "chaperon" himself. Words were put into his mouth—ineptitudes! Greater love hath no man than he lay down his *style* for his friend. He was so willing to help that he was eager to be comprehended of the people.

Mary Robinson asked him to write an article for the *Book of France* and she would translate it. It would appear here in English, too. He said to me, shyly:

"I want you to let me read you something I have written. Perhaps you would be kind enough to tell me if I am comprehensible? They tell me"—he turned his head away—"that I am obscure. . . ."

A pause. He was preparing apologies . . . for the immense compliment he was going to pay me . . . sweetly clumsy: "You must not think that I am preparing to experiment on a vile body . . . yours . . . I

just remembered that you were one of my oldest friends."

He read . . . standing . . . walking up and down in the front part of the room a long way from where I sat. But I heard. His voice, strong, resonant—the wonderful voice that old invalid men can muster when put to it—trembled, not from feebleness, but from emotion. Emotion, in Henry James! It was all perfectly clear, and of a poignancy! That was because he was in love with his subject. France, *la belle France* . . . intensely feminine, a bit of a cat, as I always see her. She stood there personified. No real woman could have resisted a real lover pleading in such a voice as that for *le don de l'amoureuse Merci*. Listening, I was stimulated to boldness—actual impertinence, it seemed to me ten minutes afterwards. But he was not angry; he knew that his reading had provoked the boldness that had borne me on the wave of enthusiasm which must earn me my forgiveness. It was an old man's slinky triumph. One for me, too, for twice this day I had succeeded in making Henry shy.

I said, "Mr. James! . . . I did not know you could be so—*passionate*!" I had sought and found *le mot juste*.

He turned and glared a little . . . a frown that was really a smile . . . he was gratified at the tremendous effect he had produced on this woman he always persisted in calling a frivolous *mondaine*. He walked towards a bookcase at the other end of the room to give himself a countenance . . . and time. . . . He also had to find *le mot juste*!

He found it. He turned on me an eye, *narquois*, reflective, stork-like, a little devilish, calmly wise—the Henry James eye, in fact—and, with a little pompous laugh . . . the male warding off any attack that the persevering female might possibly be contemplating against his supreme bachelordom:

" Ah, madam, you must not forget that in this article I am addressing—not a Woman, but a Nation ! "

Of course, he had gout now, like any good old English gentleman. Sometimes when I went to see him he would have his foot—both feet—swathed in linen bandages. laid out helplessly on a chair in front of him—" My old pain in possession "—very much annoyed if I dropped my glove or something that, however near his chair, he could not pick up for me. He stooped for things in excess—embarrassingly—and I have known such a contretemps cloud a whole afternoon. He would be a little untidy, perhaps, dressing-gown unequally disposed over night-gear, looking what he was—a thoroughly ugly man, with eyes dull, dyspeptic and inward, flat and deep set, like landlocked bays, gloomy, relieved at times by the harbour-lights of humour—a stony twinkle of innocent malice. He was all good—*herzen's gut*, as poor little Elizabeth Schultz used to say of the editor.

But, well or ill, it was understood that we talked in these days of war and nothing but war. There was to be no resumption of the Society gossip in which he used to delight. It was what one had gathered about Zeppelin defences while staying at an anti-aircraft station at Shingle Street, on the east coast, or whether one thought the recruiting good at Cardiff or at Redcar, where one would have lived for a month or two. Were the streets nicely full of khaki? Had I really seen a ten-shilling piece in that remote corner of Wales? Several? And what did the many men I must have met tell me about their respective experiences, and could I bring Mr. Stacke, the wounded officer of my acquaintance to see him who, after the battle of the Marne, riding into Paris, had made a *détour* to see the Château de Pierrefonds? And he would wear him next his heart, for he loved to think of an officer as a Bayard

who had not altogether lost his love of the arts. Rupert Brooke, a little wounded but able to come to lunch, he cherished like a son. I remember seeing his hand laid on the knee of the young soldier-poet like a benediction. We would drive him home after lunch in the carriage. He must be petted . . . must not walk, even if he could. . . .

He would never speak of Rupert Brooke after he had died.

He sometimes, but not often, spoke to me of Conrad who had sent *his* son and had so far got him safe, but never knew whether he was to be allowed to keep him—until the end.

Conrad got very low in hope towards the end. We were all of us, gentle and simple, writers and readers, under the flail, winnowed out to the death. Conrad, a *grincheur*, seemed more beaten than the rest.

These were the little old bitter speeches that fear and waiting forced from him :

“ *Oui, mon cher*. . . . Our world of fifteen years ago is going to pieces, and what will come in its place God knows, but, I imagine, doesn't care. . . .

“ Still, what I have said was the only immortal line in our *Romance* : ‘ Excellency, a few goats survive. . . . ’

“ Esoteric, sublime, profound, and comic, it still survives ! ”

And, of the far-flung battle-front of the *English Review*, some survive and Some Do Not. Conrad has gone; James and Hudson went soon after the peace. The last of those two great veterans, on his window-sill in Kilburn, had fed the birds that came to his hand from the heavy masking plane-trees that gave them shelter, out of his very substance, all through the war . . . but it was not the weakening of his rations that killed him. It was



WILLIAM HENRY HUDSON



age. He was almost old enough to live on air. I think he very nearly did, if one listened to his housekeeper and heard what a very little food supported that fine, thin, shooting flame of energy. It must have been on air and the store of the mind-energy that he walked, that he boarded 'buses in motion, that he climbed the heights of Campden Hill to drink tea with me and the William Rothensteins and "Wyn" Hooper, who had known his wife and who was his kind and thoughtful executor. If he dined with me, he gaily and deliberately eked out a potato or so as against our cutlet or slice off the joint. Once he called at six and took me to a cinema. That night neither of us had any dinner. He did not seem to miss it. But he liked afternoon tea and cake best, and adored meeting people, whispering to me before they came that he could not stand it.

"DEAR MR. EWART,—Will you come to-morrow to tea to meet the most charming man in the world? Not a party. He is too old and ill, but I know you will be gentle."

Poor Wilfred Ewart, whom Mr. Hudson particularly wanted to meet, died a few months afterwards in Mexico. He came, and he was gentle, for he, too, could not be otherwise. The war had maimed him and made him shy; he had the *mine effarée* of a faun. I remember the spare, angular young soldier sitting, his long neck like a pillar hardly moving in its still, high collar, his ear ragged, torn by a shot, standing away slightly from his cheek, beside the graceful, perfect old man of unknown age—except that his first communications about the birds he had seen at and around Buenos Ayres appears in the *Athenæum* round about 1870.

Yes, though I had known him since I was a child, and he was grey then, I supposed him not more than seventy

at the very most, delicate and catch-coldy because of his foreign birth. I always hastened to fence off any accidental revelation of its date, for who knows that he did not take an elfish pleasure in our ignorance of his secret. I was careful of him because I knew that he had a weak heart, and had recommended the young man to be soothing lest, in his ardour, he wearied or startled the dynamo that maintained the delicate spirit in its gracile sheath of flesh. Huddie was deceptive in that he was so anxious not to give trouble and so proud of this unknown weight of years gallantly and unobtrusively borne.

He would enter the room, full of people or otherwise, with the wearied grace of a D'Orsay, his small head slightly bowed, as if in deprecation of his tallness. He would bestow his long legs unobtrusively on a small gilt chair, or, if we were alone, on a *causeuse*, reclining where other men would have lolled. I would note the fine line from shoulder to knee and the steel-like limbs in their well-made clothes, for he cared for his appearance—went to a good tailor and chose his colours carefully. If I offered him a cushion, ten to one he would refuse it, but latterly, of his own motion, he would stretch himself out on the sofa and “put up his feet” like a lady.

In the autumn we would desert the Pre-Raphaelite drawing-room and go for greater warmth and comfort to the Vorticist study, where all the comfortable saddlebag chairs were. All styles, all rooms, all houses even, that were not a “lodge of boughs,” were alike to him. He had no “taste”—so called. We sat together on that welcome anomaly, the extra large Chesterfield sofa that came from my great-grandfather's rectory in Durham, and, with our backs turned—it was his only sign of misliking—to the cubes and fireworks, and towards the “Long Girl” of Albert Rutherston, which he rather liked, he would tell me in that tenuous, wistful voice of his, which now I

know to have been the sign of age, of cats and birds, poets and publishers, nuns and flappers ("maidens" or "maidies" he would call them when they lived in the country!). He would declare pettishly that, since it had been announced that he was writing a book on animals, he was overwhelmed with letters from people about their so talented pets. He discussed his collected edition and the tiresome ways of rival publishers. He was proud of having prevented a beautiful young Catholic nurse in Cornwall from taking the vows, and pleased, too, that the nuns—because of his charm, I very well suppose, had forgiven him.

He spoke very plainly to me about this girl's figure and her obvious and startling aptness for motherhood. I think Mr. Epstein must have second sight, for the author's description of this lady's contours tallied with the sculptor's presentment of the Spirit of Nature—whom the public still persist in calling Rima—which I went on a summer's day lately to the Park to see unveiled. I know that Rima, in *Green Mansions*, was very much under six feet, with a voice too large for her body. *Cela fait l'éloge* of Emily Hudson's husband, for she did sing divinely, and she was so short that a high footstool was always placed in front of her, and her hands were large, ugly, and ill-kept. Mr. Epstein has builded better than he knows.

Like many wilfully shy and withdrawn persons, he did not want for knowledge of the world, and once, when we watched a cinema reproduction of the orgiastic midnight life of New York, he was more up to the cynical implications of it all than I was. He did not mince words or fight shy of medical terms or disdain to go into the pros and cons of a recent ugly case with an absence of circumlocution and a directness of expression that seemed to disinfect them. As for the sexual aberrations of the classical world, I once asked him to tell me about the

nightingale whose song I had heard in his own downland country, and realised only the pity and terror, none of the fabled beauty, of the cry. He told me very slowly, without emphasis—and it took a long time—a shocking, as it were police-court, story of savage lust and cruelty. I have never listened to the nightingale since; but when next comes to my ears the heart-rending wail that crept along the hedges at Marten I shall see the place of the slaying of Itylus, and hear, not the love-plaint, but the voice of the child's blood crying woe against the woman who, for the sake of revenge, slays joy—as women do.

As the winter drew on and his necessary flight to the Cornish Riviera loomed before him, he spoke to me of death and its imminence timidly, faintly, allusively, as I imagine primitive people and peasants may, fearful lest they who hold the shears may hear . . . take notice, perhaps, that such a one is overdue in the shades. . . . And one afternoon in his own house, the dark of an October day made darker by the dolorous planes, dusty with the summer's drift of the streets they mercifully masked, he sat beside me on the tattered, leather-covered sofa, under the tall book-case, bowed a little, like some sad soul sitting on the Stygian brink, "waiting for waftage," and held out to me his soft, warm, life-giving hand, so little suggestive of Death of which, for once, he spoke freely.

That day the King of Shadows was in the wide, cavernous room . . . a new candour had come into being . . . fostered perhaps by some egotistic complaint of my own. He announced defiantly, as he had announced many a time before, that he was engaged in tearing up manuscripts, burning naturalist's notes, commandeering his own letters from friends, "so as to leave not a scrap. . . ." His voice rose; he was asserting his right and will to destroy as he was to be destroyed. One of his scientific friends had put before him a ruthless theory

of the non-survival of consciousness after death which I knew disturbed and convinced him. Since, so his friend told him, all ideas and associations are recorded on minute filaments of the brain substance, and since these mortal filaments decay, he could not believe that the register they hold, which is, in effect, consciousness, can survive. As well expect the manuscripts of the Four Courts to have remained after the place was burned down!

He sat with his head upon his hands; the sting of death was so sharp that no futile, *cliché*-like consolation could modify its poignancy. I despaired, even as he did, but I tried to instil the comfort of which I indeed could not avail myself.

"Don't talk to me. *I know. I know.* You are young. . . ." I realised then that he must really be old to talk like that. "I am looking straight at death—down a funnel—that narrows—the end of it is closed. And I have nothing to do but die. . . ." The languid legs crossed and uncrossed.

"I cannot, at my age, forget for a single moment. And I don't want to!" He said that quite querulously, and then sat up and smiled, as if to beg forgiveness for showing temper with me—and Death. He resumed, in a voice low, soft, changed from the voice of his rage, "The time will come . . . I shall not see the grass and the things moving up and down in it. And when *you* talk of being unhappy! . . ."

I asked him piteously if he was really sure that all was lost when we were dead, and he bade me, gently, read something he had written in his last book which he had sent me, and guessed that I had not read—*The Return of the Chiff-Chaff*. All he thought about Death was there; it was the nearest he could get to telling me what he felt. I *had* forgotten it . . . I floundered a little, but he did not notice. He was, for the moment, beyond literary politenesses; an animal trapped, with knowledge of its

doom ; a child afraid of the oncoming dark ; a grown man simply dreading " the night when no man can work."

The distress of eld was communicated to me, although I *was* younger. We sat still. The leaves of the plane-trees outside rustled, and the pigeons, near their hour of feeding from his hand, cooed sweetly. The handsome Scotch housekeeper like a Rossetti, with her wistful, primmed, yet curved and sensuous mouth, who was all the woman about the house for this lonely man and a couple of old maids in the flats above and below, came in and cleared away some of the rusty old keepsake albums, and the new smart gilt volumes that came out of America, from the centre table, and, shoving others on one side, spread a cloth worked in coloured crewels and set a tray on that to nestle uncomfortably among the literary wrack. " Well, come to tea," he said wearily, and he moved to the table, and I poured out the tea, which, I believe, he would rather have done, and we both ate large buns whose savage currantiness I did not appreciate but made a note to offer him the like next time he came to me instead of flimsy bread and butter, for tea was his last meal ; and when we had eaten we went into a sort of a little box of a pantry to get the maize and lay it on the projecting tray on the sill which he had fashioned to support the food and the unwieldy grey birds that knew him, though, with me there, they would not come, but sat aloof and looked at us.

I liked best to get him to come to me, forth of the dreary domain where he stayed out of pride and loyalty to " Rima," the Voice in the Tree, who had lived there with him till hideous illness forced her from his side six years ago—the lady of *Green Mansions*. I had never seen her, but I had heard of her always as a tiny being heavy for her height, possessed of golden hair and a mighty voice, who, long since she had charmed him, had grown sullen and cantankerous ; made pettish demands

on his time and his patience, and kept his friends away from the house. Indeed, he once told me in a letter, deprecating my too sentimental view of the relations of man and woman, that he had not married his wife for love but for companionship. "He that loveth his life shall lose it." She lived away, and he was glad of it.

I have never found in all my friend's writings a line that leads me to suppose that he ever entertained that exclusive emotion, that desperately passionate interest, with which modern men may regard modern women—modern love, which is, after all, an invention of the Minnesingers ratified by the Courts of Countesses of Champagne when a knight's devotion was his constant moral wear, like his lady's sleeve on his heaulme. He spoke of a woman's "passion" to me once, but it was only a spasm of humanitarianism evoked in the beautiful Dorothy Grey by the sight of an act of stupid cruelty. She noticed an ugly tramp picking a bird out of a hedge and putting it into his pocket. She rose from her seat. "Give that to me!" she said, and the hedge-thief, daunted by her splendid and "passionate" gesture surrendered his prey and the lady lay in "Huddie's" heart for ever.

Once, surely—normally, simply, like the birds and beasts in their springtime—he sought a mate, and, even then, it was a spiritual one, that Voice in a tree. That was his romance, and the extinguishing of it and the Voice together his tragedy!

Before I went down to the country last August I gave him my address, saying that, if I did not hear from him soon—just a line—I should be anxious, and I am afraid that offended him a little and prevented him from writing. Aware of his wild susceptibility on the score of being looked after, I did not worry much, as I was coming home soon.

On the Friday morning I had come downstairs, faint with want of sleep, into the large, light library and glanced at *The Times*, telling my host that, in the watches of the night, I had had a presentiment that on opening the paper, I should see the announcement of my friend's death—as, of course, I should some day, for he was old—and in very large letters, for he was a great man.

The morning after that I awoke refreshed after sleeping well, and, after breakfast, opened *The Times* and read of the death of Dame Genevieve Ward, and lingered over the details of her life-history while, all the time, in the adjacent column, was the announcement I had dreaded to see. Only when I had done one column did the headline of the next strike me, and I saw that a greater than she had gone. He had died while I watched, sleepless, the night before. I went to one of the tall windows and looked out on the placid Kentish scene, and made up my mind to look on his face once more and walk after him to the grave, wherever it was they chose to lay him. And all the rest of the day I was telephoning to find out where and when that was to take place. Between waiting for trunk calls and return telegrams I mused on those hours spent with him, and especially the last time that one never knows to be the last, or one would never have the heart to part.

We had been lunching at Whiteley's together, under the dome. He liked a table there—the pearly glass roof, that scintillated with flakes of light, implied sky, and the opposite of his home, with its black, smoke-stained ceiling, the tattered wallpaper, and picture-frames with all their gilding gone. We had a very bad luncheon which he enjoyed—spinach and cheese and coffee—and we talked languidly of Wagner. There was a shadow under the gleaming dome. He was dull and far away.

He put me into a 'bus. As we crossed the road, an access of the protective instinct came over me, which I

showed and he lightly resented. While we waited for the 'bus he was telling me that he had just bought a coat-dress for a girl, and it had cost £2 10s. I fancy that was for the landlady's little daughter at Penzance. Then the 'bus drew up, and I got in and watched him, still nervous, out of the window between the people's heads, as he turned away and walked in the direction of Kilburn. He was agile and upright ; only the other day Alice told me that, after lunch, her girls walked with him to the bottom of Sheffield Terrace, and, to go home, he had boarded No. 31 while it was in motion.

I got into London at midnight on Sunday, and, early next morning, I boarded No. 31. (How our little life is rounded with these 'buses !) I got down at Westbourne Park Station, turned some corners, and came to a row of gaunt and decaying stuccoed and Victorian houses, standing back, with what they call a garden, from a straw- and paper-bestrewn street. This was where he and his wife had lived in the tall house at the corner of another dreadful street bisecting it.

"Huddie" was his own landlord ; I had been told that he owned the whole row, but my impression is that only one house was his, which he had converted into three flats and basement for a housekeeper. For himself, he had retained the first floor ; his tenants, he told me, were preferably ladies.

I looked in vain for the usual effect of white eyelids cast down, but not until I was quite near did I become aware that the usual sign of respect had been paid him, and that all the windows were blanks of dirty Union, dun-coloured like the walls. The door was open. The Scotch housekeeper with the Rossetti face was talking to "Ground Floor," a sad-faced old maid. "I was expecting you," she said. The old lady bundled away. My hands were full of sprigs of Banksia roses, which I had wrenched from the bush at my own door because he had admired

it so often, standing there by the bell he had just rung, looking like a traveller from a distance, with a coat upon his arm, especially when it was warm weather. I had scratched my hand. I had been in such a hurry to get there before they fastened down the lid of the coffin, so as to look my last upon the most beautiful human being my eyes have ever rested upon.

His beauty—I use the word in the sense of that dominating, all-over excellence which may characterise all men and women so favoured of the gods—was implicit in the whole of his being. It was not determined to the head or face; to my mind his face was too small, too beak-like, too much refined to a point. If, as we have it, all men suggest likeness to some animal, one might figure him some bird pressing forward against a gale; his profile and his hair, even, had a wind-blown, backward sweep. It was not an “open” face, the gaze of it was, on the whole, too shrewd, too wilful and withdrawn. The eyes were bright and dark, the regard narrowed continually in a sort of wild, astute vigilance. The eyes had grown less bright, less vigilant, and the voice, always quiet and measured, in these last months thin and faint, sometimes querulous, as of a prophet ancient and disregarded, like Burne-Jones’s Merlin in the hawthorn brake. . . .

The housekeeper said No! he was screwed down already, and was to be “took” by road to-morrow at nine to Broadwater Cemetery, where his wife was buried. There was no need to go up, so we stood on the rough, hairy mat, interrupted by tradesmen, peered at by the disgracious old tenants of his choice who made a business of crossing and recrossing the dull hall, made gay by my flaring red roses. Behind us, at the top of the kitchen stairs gaping black, little red-cheeked Rossetti children in cleanish pinafores poked their heads up and asked their mother what they should do about this and that. . . .

He had been unwell since Monday, with the indigestion high up. He kept touching his chest, saying that he could not sleep because of the oppression. . . . He was sure that, if he could only get some sleep, he would be all right again, and he determined to eat nothing solid. She got a doctor in who had agreed with him, so he had just Bovril and some weak tea. I thought, and said, that perhaps the doctor meant *made* beef-tea and nourishing cocoa. "Yes," said the housekeeper, "I expect the doctor did, but he would not have things made on purpose for him, nor yet a nurse." He was very fond of tea, and used to make it in the little pantry for himself as early as five in the morning when he had not slept, and at all sorts of queer hours.

These independent arrangements, these matutinal roving, constituted, I think, one at least of the reasons why he would not come and stop with me, as I pressed him to do when he complained that his bones ached so that he could not sleep, having confidence in my own soft mattresses. But he said gently, "My dear, I don't want to come and die in your house!" The image evoked was like a sudden jab at one's heart, and made one answer brusquely, "I shouldn't mind." Once, when his need was very sore—the housekeeper was going away for a fortnight's much-needed holiday—he did promise as he saw me to the corner. He was to come and stay the very next night. I shouted from the step of No. 31 to him, standing bareheaded among the paper strewings and detritus of suburban life which banked the gutter: "Now mind, I expect you!" But I felt he would never come.

The indigestion couldn't be stirred; the oppression continued, and he lay there sleepless, alone. The housekeeper went up as often as she could. He spoke, she said, often of Alice and of me, admitting it was a bad job we were both away and couldn't come and talk to

him, but he would not have us sent for—"No, no!" in his weak, threadlike voice. On Thursday morning his best friend came to him, the man who had given him to us all for ten years longer, making him take digitalis for his weak heart, but had not dared to bring in a nurse lest he should kill his dear by over-exciting him; but he insisted on bringing in a specialist. The prescription of that gentleman was not to hand till midnight—"and then we had to go for it all the way to Whiteley's!" Whiteley's is not very far. Oh, that I had been there to use my legs in his service!

At midnight she left him, charging him on no account to get up, for she would look in herself at five o'clock and make his tea. She did so. It was dawn when she saw him again, lying awake but uncomplaining, rather more cheerful. He said that he felt drowsy, and, after he had had his tea, he settled himself confidently to go to sleep. She thought him a bit dazed and queerish, but that was partly because, before she left the room again, he shook hands with her, saying, "Good-bye!" instead of "Good-night!" But, as she afterwards reflected, the night was by that time well over, and he might have thought of that. . . .

At eight she sent the little Rossetti girl up to his room to call him, who returned saying that he was asleep. So she let him "lie" a little longer—about half an hour—and then sent the child again, who returned with the same answer, adding that she had touched the gentleman and he did not wake. Then the sweet woman, full of fears, hurried upstairs, and found him lying on his side—mercifully; for then, she said, the chance was he would not have had ill dreams. He was quite warm—not long dead. He did not get cold till midday, she said but was still warm in the small of his back. . . . And his face was beautiful . . . beautiful . . . but a few hours later so altered that she could not bear to look at it.

I said that I *must* go up. There was no chance of seeing him. I knew the lid was screwed down ; but I believe, confused, obfuscated by sudden grief, I thought I *should* see him, for the first thing I did on going into the room was to look at the wide bed on which the sheet was untidily pulled up, expecting to see the outline of a form beneath it. And I said, " But where is he ? " like Mary Magdalene, and she pointed to the coffin, which I had overlooked, drawn up alongside of the bed like a sort of *annexe*. It was of light and smooth yellow wood, glistening with brass clamps and drop-handles. There were some white flowers near the name-plate, and I laid my roses beside them ; it seemed to me now silly and useless, but I had brought them for that purpose. Then I stood and stared all round that long, ugly room into which he had once brought me to show the Chinese toilet service he wanted me to have—afterwards. It was so large and unwieldy that he only used the soap dish and toothbrush tray of one set, and he had three. The spare ewers and basins were in the drawing-room on top of a high Chippendale bookcase, and I was appalled to see him stand, both hands raised, on the tippy back of the sofa in front of it to reach them down, for I knew he had a heart. The jugs, with long, narrow necks like vases, embossed with birds and flowers in green and red and yellow, were heavy. I didn't know what ware, nor did he. He had said he wanted to sell two sets out of the three, and I told him I would like to buy one—for ten pounds say ? He had forgotten what he had said about giving it me. He hesitated, saying, " I don't know the value . . . and . . . it might be *more* than ten pounds ? " So the bargain lapsed.

At the foot of the bed was a table covered with green baize and a writing-pad, with a pen lying near it, filled up to half-way down. Had he got out of bed to write in the night ? We wondered. . . . Near the foot of

the bed was an empty saucer. He had been feeding the cat, I suppose. . . .

We stood, the woman who had spoken with him last and I, talking out loud. "How can we?" I said, and, with a despairing gesture, she replied, "It doesn't matter." She was weeping, but, although she spoke of him with regard, it was not the familiar fondness that good, kind masters evoke in persons of her class. I imagine that her sentimentality was rebutted by her simplicity, his polite aloofness which was the meed of us all. He must have seemed to her "so different from most gentlemen she had done for," and, of course, she had not the intercourse with him through his writings which we had.

She spoke of his wife, quite six years away from this house, and, indeed, it was time she went! Her nerves were awful. Her ways—her hands—well! The Rossetti mouth stiffened in retrospective disgust. Her legs were so short that she always had to have a footstool. I knew that well enough. She wore ringlets. She did not like him away, and he never left her unless there was someone chartered to sit with her. I remember his visits to our house in those days, and how, at the stroke of six, Huddie would put down his cup or whatever he was holding and bolt back to her. I never dared offer to call; I was told that she would have been rude to me; and now, judging from this nice creature's unconsidered utterances, I realised that was very likely. He was "good with her"—what does not that phrase mean?—but, of course, it gave him nerves, too. . . .

Was he ever in danger of forgetting that this dwarfish, exacting creature had been, sometime, the songstress who sat in her bower in the tree-tops and charmed the young huntsman's soul out of his body with her singing? I do not think so. He drank his cups, and asked not that they should pass from him.

There was a dull crimson stain on the side of the covering sheet next the coffin. She saw my eyes fixed on it, and started talking of ugly things pertaining to the mortal body which lets us down, betrays us so in our hour of helplessness, forcing us to relinquish our carefully retained elegancies and decencies . . . she was willing to gratify the taste we all share for the macabre. But I would not let her do so, for the sake of love and remembrance and the cult of the vision I meant to retain. The dreadful antithesis was less plain to her than me. That this pale Exquisite, whose mortal dross should surely have been transmuted quickly into the pale dews of spirit—that this Incorruptible must first don Corruption and, in making his toilet for the grave, bleed red blood like a soldier on the battlefield! I thought that I, and how much more he, would have preferred to shield the mortal lapse in some dark, cold cave, or, lying in state on a mountain peak, have the eagles pick his brains as white as those of a harmless sheep on Helvellyn. For such a one to perish in the wrack of a "mouldering lodge" in Kilburn! . . .

It was his own choice, yet, from that moment, everywhere, the suggestion of decay. In the passage, where the oilcloth had "perished" in parti-coloured scabs; in the drawing-room, where, from the blotched and bleared red sofas and *bergères*, the leather was peeling off, hanging in pendent flaps like the disgusting wattles round the neck of a vulture. Not here! Oh, not here! Better a shepherd's hut in Marten or on Yarm-bury Camp, near Wylze, failing a peak in the Andes.

"Victoria, August 22nd, 11 o'clock."

"Change at Brighton! Front part of the train."

There were not more than five or six people walking up and down the platform whom I singled out as interested in this direction—two old men, full of years and dignity,

one of the type of the foxy statesmen of the Elizabethan age, the other eager, yet tired-looking; another, the chief executor who had made all the arrangements, carrying a carton of flowers, rallying us all, seeking to cover his grief with an attempt at Mark Tapleyism for which we were all of us, perhaps, obliged to him. There was a distinguished literary critic and a literary doctor risen very obviously from a sick-bed to follow his lifelong friend on this last lap. Presently Alice touched me on the shoulder, and we, the only two women in the convoy, stayed with each other all the time. At South Kensington I had missed a train to get out and buy a pocket-handkerchief, though resolved not to "break down." To the same end Alice had brought none at all.

The country flashed by us. We duly changed at Brighton and went on to Worthing. From the windows of the train, as we crossed the Arun, I saw the reaches of sunburned, shining sand, the tips of the masts of ships, and inlet bays of sea between the scattered chalets of Shoreham. There flowed in to us the smell of the sea, of tar, and other tokens of man's daily occupation, repugnant enough to mourners who are absenting themselves from their own full lives awhile that they may solemnly accompany a fallen comrade part of the way to the shades.

At Worthing we had an hour to wait before the carriages that were to take us to the cemetery would draw up outside the station, so we sat down, all of us, at a marble-topped table in the refreshment room and fed like a horse that unconcernedly crops the grass by the side of a dead fellow, but shamefacedly, being human. *I* think it was more what *he* would have wished. He was too real for sentiment.

The publishers began to discuss the literary reputation of their late client and the proposed Collected

Edition. I was glad they had the grace to leave money out of the discussion. The red-cheeked, white-bearded one intimated politely that this reputation had been all owing to a confrère, present, who disclaimed the honour, and gave it away to a third, absent. Alice was disgusted ; but to me, for whom the Work was the Life, this conversation was not so much out of place. Often and often Mr. Hudson and I had discussed this Collected Edition ; the claims, pegged out, of different publishers were the plague of his life. In the same breath he would say that he wanted no memoirs written, no serving up of note-books *à la Butler*. . . . There was talk now of a forgotten novel, published in his youth, of which I had never heard him speak. It was not up to the level of *Green Mansions*, but had "very fine passages. . . ." Someone said he "would not have wished it. . . ."

But have not the generations to come a right to the royal crumbs from our life's table, and must posterity be deprived of these portions of performance not equal to the masterpieces of a great man, but holding "fine passages" ? And shall the amiable whim, praiseworthy in itself, of a modest genius be set against the delight of future generations ?

The carriage stopped against some iron railings, in front of a stone gate-house through whose archway we got a glimpse of a sunlit, flower-bedight prairie. On the platform of sullen macadam a white-banded, black-gloved clergyman was standing beside the box that was raised on a hand-cart. Borne by grunting bearers, it followed us into the tiny chapel, where, for half an hour, we listened to St. Paul's puzzling pronouncements delivered in tones that suggested the reader's disclaimer of any possible interpretation. When we came out it appeared to be a question of who was to walk first after the coffin. A short lady, in dull, complete black, was

mentioning with tearful urgency her name and status. For six years she had "been with" the wife of the deceased, and therefore desired to walk first. . . . But the chief mourner of us all, walking alone and quickly with his bunch of heather, was long ahead of us—meant to be. Alice and I passed down the path bordered by headstones, while the insistent lady in black walked alone behind.

I felt her mute, inward clamour in my back and with Alice's permission, invited her to walk between us. This earned us a sad and backward glance from Mr. Hudson's friend, for she now talked loudly about her late patient. She had often seen the husband—oh, yes, he used to come down to Worthing sometimes and push his wife about along the front in a bath-chair. She regretted that he had not been down once since her funeral, so had not seen how the daisies were growing on the double grave with the headstone equally divided between. He had purchased the plot of ground, promising to lie beside her and put his name under hers. "She was always ill, and couldn't even see to read when I came to her. . . . Over eighteen months of it! . . . She said many a time, 'I am so glad I got a *lady* to look after me!'" . . . and so on and so on. Behind us was the Rossetti housekeeper, silent enough, her red mouth pinched with weeping and her young husband bearing a sheaf of flowers in tissue paper.

The grave was close to an ash-tree, whose coarse, tough roots, truncated by the digger's spade, stuck out like a man's six days' beard from the loamy walls of the grave, like yellow panels.

The sun shone keen, the wind rustled in the ash-keys. The box was lowered into the hole with bands coloured like the rejected soil heaped half-way up the trunk of the tree. The feet of the men pashed the pink and white daisies on the other neat plot. Well, they would spring

again! The young clergyman read the remainder of the service from his prayer-book, propped before him, his soft hat used as a lectern. Taken so, it was not very moving, and no one broke down. He said "*Earth to earth*" so quickly that most of us lost the phrase of phrases. It was as well for our self-control. His assistant did not miss his cue, but, picking from the handy heap of soil behind him the necessary grains of earth, threw them. They did not rattle, being clayey, and, when he had performed his task, he dusted his palms together with a gesture of disgust, as a white-handed, amateur gardener might have done.

The woman who had "been with" the dead man's wife shouted:

"Now she's happy! At last! She's got him to herself!"

Afterwards, the kind executor showed me how to look on it all *à la Hudson*. "Yes, poor thing!" he said. "It was her hour. Her one chance in her dull life of expressing herself—of being before the public. *He* wouldn't have stopped her!"

No one else said anything. No one cried, but one mourner who, after throwing his sprigs of heather down and giving us some to throw too, walked away, stumbling over the graves, his bowed head shaking with sobs. The vicar, after picking me out absently to shake hands with, departed, and the local reporters pattered about, scrutinising names on the wreaths and asking questions of anyone who would answer. Some of the mourners, informed that the grave of Richard Jeffries, another great earth-lover, was only five minutes' walk away, went to look at it. A few of us stood there, hesitating, not liking to leave him. . . .

Mourners, left standing upright beside a fallen comrade, are apt to make elision of those days before the burying, when their beloved has lain prone and already solitary

in a darkened room under a drawn sheet. We insist on thinking of him as we last saw him, erect under a roof that is waterproof, with a fire to keep him warm; or, sturdy, in the street, holding an umbrella, perhaps, to shield him from the rain. We may have been "sitting" with him to prevent him feeling solitary, but now:

. . . in the colde Grave,  
Alone, withouten any company,

we leave him. We are of our nature, ruthless—of our civilisation, grown utilitarian; we have the heart—because of a certain chemical change, gradual, hardly to be detected at the beginning, except by experts—to consign this beloved brother of ours who has, peradventure, only just left our table, our fireside, to lie in a cold ditch six feet long by three feet wide or so, to spend his first night, perhaps, alone under the stars or the rain.

In his own words—and capitals—set down in the little article of faith—of which he spoke to me, William Henry Hudson had suffered "The Monstrous Betrayal." The Power he worshipped but did not trust had destroyed him, willy-nilly. And I must return home, and quietly, within doors, warm and cherished, read again with reverence *The Return of the Chiff-Chaff*, that trivial incident wherein his philosophy is embodied, and learn from him the grudging but undistinguishing submission of all natural things to natural law that he practised who preached.

THE END





JAN 20 1983



